This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

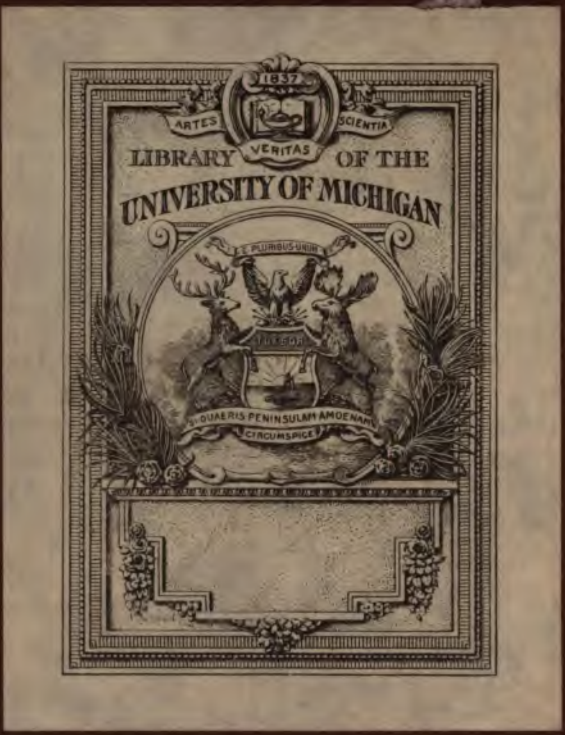
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
1837
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
E PLURIBUS UNUM
TUEBOR
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY STUDIES
IN
HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

HERBERT B. ADAMS, EDITOR

History is past Politics and Politics present History—*Freeman*

EXTRA VOLUME
XIV

FLORENTINE LIFE

DURING

[illegible]

THE RENAISSANCE

BY

WALTER B. SCAIFE, Ph. D. (Vienna)

Author of "America: Its Geographical History"

BALTIMORE
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
1893

COPYRIGHT, 1893, BY THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS.

JOHN MURPHY & CO., PRINTERS,
BALTIMORE.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

I. FLORENCE AND THE FLORENTINES.. 1

Compared with Athens and Rome, 1. Beauty of the city and its environs, 2. City walls, 3. Streets paved and provided with sewers at an early date, 4. The cathedral—Remarkable commission to its architect, 5. The baptistery and other churches, 6. The Palazzo Vecchio, 7. The Loggia dei Lanzi—Palazzo del Podestà—Ponte Vecchio, 8. The Strozzi and other palaces, 9. The Florentines of the Renaissance, a race of geniuses—Their energy, individuality passionateness, fickleness, avarice, commercial spirit, generosity, industry, frugality, and public spiritedness, 10. America named after a Florentine—Political evolution of the city, 13. Florence becomes independent, 14. Guelphs and Ghibellines, 15. The city's growth in wealth and population, 16. Florence the pioneer in modern art, 17. The republics of Athens and Florence, the patrons of the two great art epochs of the world, 18. The Florentines as diplomates—Foreign intercourse, 19. Florentine influence, 20.

II. THE GOVERNMENT.. 21

The people divided into three classes—Grandi, 21. Popolani—Popolini, 22. Guilds, 23. Signoria, 24. Gonfaloniere di giustizia, 26. Podestà, 27. Captain of the people 28. Council of one hundred—Council of the commune—Council of three hundred—Council of ninety—Council of the captains of the seven major guilds, 31. Buonuomini—Parliamentary procedure, 32. General parliament, 33. Ordinances of justice, 34. Conservators of the laws, Grand council, 35. Consuls of the guilds—Short periods of office holding, 36. Uprising of the Ciompi, 37. Foreign consuls—Guelph party, 38. Eight of the guard—Captains of war, 40. Dictatorship, 41. Justice, 44. Secret accusations,

PAGE.

46. Torture, 47. Punishments, 48. Appendix: Some details of celebrated dictatorships, 49.

III. Public Life... 53

Certain families conspicuous throughout centuries, 53. Obscure persons also obtain office, but of little influence—Corruption in office, 54. A model office-holder, 56. The fickle populace, 57. Public honors, 58. Knighthood—Public funerals, 59. Receiving and sending ambassadors, 61. An embassy to the French king, 62. Musical instruments—Successes and reverses of the Medici, 64. Luca Pitti, 66. Dante—Savonarola, 68. Public meetings on the Piazza della Signoria, 69. Acts of the mob—Stones as weapons, 70. Street fights, 71. Florentine life compared with ours, 72.

IV. Private Life... 75

Simple home life, a chief characteristic—Illustrative anecdotes, 75. Private houses, 77. Money values—The marriage-tie, 78. Family affection, 79. Position of women—Dress, 80. Sumptuary laws, 81. Lorenzo de' Medici's opinion of women—Relations to his wife, 83. Boccaccio on women—Woman's legal position, 84. Domestic economy, 87. Men's dress—Olive oil—Wine, 88. Neatness and cleanliness, 89. Domestic book-keeping first introduced here—Country residences—Manner of life there, 90. Baptism, 93. Marriage—Dowry, 94. Wedding festivities of Lorenzo de' Medici—Burial, 95. House decoration, 96. Hospitality, 97. Etiquette, 98. Conversation raised to an art—Constant social intercourse, a probable cause of the great natural intelligence of the Florentines, 99.

V. Education and Intellectual Life.................................. 100

Mediæval and modern thought, 100. Moslem influence, 101. Material and intellectual wealth compared—Collecting manuscripts, 102. Public libraries—Textual criticism—Elementary instruction, 104. Text books, 105. Lorenzo de' Medici's education—Laws passed to attract men of intellect to the city—The university, 106. Professors—Salaries, 107. Course of study—Astrology, 108. Mathematics—Greek, 109. Florence called the modern Athens—Numerous translations made, 110. Boccaccio's influence—First printed editions of classical authors, 111. First modern use of Greek capital letters, 112. Foreign scholars at Florence, 113. University

PAGE.

students, 114. Academical degrees, 115. Other institutions of higher learning, 116. Platonic Academy, 117. Poetic contest, 119. Physical culture—Dante, 120. Machiavelli—Italian language, 121. Wandering life of the Florentines—Astronomy, 122. Medicine—Fine arts—Philistinism, 123. Engraving—Music, 125. Origin of the opera—Lessons afforded by Florentine intellectual life, 126.

VI. RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION 129

Difficulty of the subject—The papacy—Freedom of religious belief, 129. Paganisation of the Church—Florentine independence of judgment, 130. Attentive to the forms more than to the spirit of religion, 131. The Inquisition—Savonarola, 132. Scepticism, 133. Church-going, 134. Monasteries, etc., 135. Mystery plays, 136. Street shrines—Church-building and art, 137. Church and State, 138. The clergy, 139. Council of the Greek and Latin Churches, 143. Pilgrimages, 144. Science and superstition—Superstitious practices, 145. Signs and wonders, 146. Astrology in the light of modern science, 148. Indulgences and their apology, 149. The Church from different points of view, 151.

VII. COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY 152

Florentines trained both minds and hands, 152. The guild of judges and notaries, the inventor of modern notarial law—Other guilds: Calimala, 153; Bankers and money changers, 154; Wool—Doctors and druggists—Silk, 157; Furriers—Minor guilds, 159. Power of the mob, 160. Old and New Markets, 161. Court for settling commercial disputes, 162. Treaties of commerce—Foreign trade, 163. Agriculture—The labor question, 165. Wealth, 166. Coinage, 167. Prices, 172. Weights and measures, 174. Yearly trade, 175.

VIII. CHARITY, PUBLIC WORKS, AND TAXATION 177

Conditions of the most useful charity—Florentine liberality, 177. Bequest excluding the Church—The Church often a trustee—Numerous recipients of charity, 178. Charity on a large scale—Hospital endowments, 179. Treatment of the insane, 183. The Misericordia Company, 184. The Congregation of St. Martin, 185. Company of the Blacks, 186. Donations and bequests for church buildings, 187. The grain market—The dossal for San Giovanni, 188. Charity of the Church, 190. Taxes for erecting the cathedral, 191. Census of property, 192. City budget, 193. Taxes on both land and

PAGE.

personalty—Forced loans, 194. The Catasto or tax book, 195. The Specchio or register of unpaid taxes, 195. The Scala or graduated tax—Arbitrary taxation, 196. One-tax system tried under Savonarola, but without success, 198.

IX. AMUSEMENTS.. 199

Gambling and games of cards, 199. Ball games, 201. Chess—Pome or throwing the spear—May-day, 202. Sports at Epiphany—Fête of St. John, 203. Savonarola's festivals, 204. Carnival celebrations, 205. The "Car of Death," 207. Florence's greatest allegorical procession, 209. Horse racing, 211. Tournaments, 214. Spectacular reconciliation of Guelphs and Ghibellines, 215. Reception of distinguished guests, 216. Attempted battle of wild animals, 218. Theatricals, 219. The opera, 221.

X. CITIZENSHIP.. 222

Heredity and education in the formation of character—History, the teacher of lessons for nations, 222. Character of the Florentine state, 223. Population, 224. Change in its character, 225. Each element of the population has its effect on the state life—Patronage of the fine arts, 226. Growth of pauperism and corresponding change in the government, 227. Number of citizens small in proportion to the population, 228. Possession of citizenship regarded as very valuable—Loss of citizenship, 229. Titles of honor, 230. Knighthood, 231. Methods of address—The lesson of constitution-making in Florence, 233. The rights of Florentine citizens few and easily lost, their duties numerous, 234. Administration of justice—Cruelty of the criminal law—Civil law more just, 236. Political parties, 237. Prosperity and misfortunes of the city, 238. Florentine greatness, 240.

FLORENTINE LIFE DURING THE RENAISSANCE.

I.

FLORENCE AND THE FLORENTINES.

A modern writer has well said: "We must dearly love Florence, for she is the mother of all those who live by thought; we must study her without ceasing, for she offers us an inexhaustible source of instruction."[1] Hence, I trust it is not asking too much of you to come and spend an hour with me on the banks of the Arno, in that celebrated city which Nature has surrounded with beauty, where Art has achieved some of her greatest triumphs, and Literature, taken some of her sublimest flights. Here, one lives indeed in the present, but feels himself a product if not a part of the past. On these same streets have wandered many of those whose names shine in the annals of history; in these buildings have assembled many of those whose thoughts have stirred the breasts of millions; and here were created many of those magnificent works of art which now attract yearly thousands of travellers to the city.

Of never-dying interest is the city of Athens; but Nature has not given to her the exquisite setting of the pearl of Tuscany; and life there was too unlike our own to inspire us with a feeling of personal contact with her people. Rome was the mistress of the world, the protectrice of art and literature, and the giver of law even to the civilized world of to-day; but the darkness of the Middle Ages separates us from her, we see her as through a mist, and cannot touch her. But in the Florence of the Renaissance we feel almost at home; with her men and women we could converse with interest and have much in common; their manner of life, their ways of thinking, were not essentially different from our own.

---

[1] Yriarte.

What wonder then that to him who loves modern history Florence is the most inspiring of all European cities, and a visit there, the acme of his desire. Here the air is full of those melodious sounds in which Dante gave to the world his sublimest thought, in which Petrarch sang his lovely sonnets, and Boccaccio told his hundred tales. Here you may still admire in its marvellous beauty Giotto's famous tower, that

> "Lily of Florence blossoming in stone,—
> A vision, a delight, and a desire,—
> The builder's perfect and centennial flower,
> That in the night of ages bloomed alone,
> But wanting still the glory of the spire."

Here you may visit the churches where Savonarola preached, and the spot where he offered up his life in flame,—a martyr to political hatred and religious fanaticism; and, within a stone's throw, you may enter the great art gallery, whose storied walls extend even across the river, and into the Pitti palace. The plastic beauty of the city itself has been celebrated by many writers in prose and verse; and he who views it from a neighboring height, set like one of its own exquisite mosaics in an emerald frame, will not gainsay their praises. A narrow and fertile valley, watered by the golden Arno in its picturesque meanderings, and surrounded by a succession of hills, whose sunny slopes are rich in wine and olives, here offered the conditions of material prosperity. The climate, mild but not debilitating, furnished an important element in creating healthy bodies and minds,—an indispensable factor in national greatness. Amid such surroundings, there arose, in the course of centuries, a city of somewhat less than a hundred thousand inhabitants, a "City of Flowers," as its name implies, and as it really was and still is; and here bloomed in rare perfection the earliest flowers of the Renaissance, from whose fruit we still continue to derive both pleasure and nourishment.

Into the disputed subject of the city's origin, we shall not enter. Suffice it to say that, from very ancient and small beginnings, it had already, at the end of the thirteenth century, become too large for its second circuit of walls, and the city authorities commanded the building of a new and much larger circuit. Work on the new walls was begun soon afterwards; but so many causes of delay and interruption occurred, that the fourteenth century was well advanced before the work approached completion. The city is divided by the river into two unequal portions, the larger of which contained five of the six early political divisions of the community. All the inhabitants living southwest of the Arno were united into one district, which was called Oltrarno, or the other side of the Arno, as distinguished from the principal and better populated side. The new walls surrounding the main portion of the city were about two and a half miles long, and provided with numerous gates and forty-five towers. Until after the middle of the present century, these walls remained standing; but were finally removed to make way for a handsome boulevard, their presence being rendered unnecessary if not useless by the modern advances in the art of war. However, several of the ancient gates were left standing, their sober forms affording a striking object lesson in history. While Michael Angelo was city engineer, during the troublous time in the early part of the sixteenth century, very considerable additions were made to the walls of Oltrarno; and, as modern improvements have not yet called for their removal, several stretches of them are yet standing, their grim battlements recalling many a scene of other days, when Guelph and Ghibelline struggled for the mastery of the city, "and every street ran red with blood."

Already in Michael Angelo's day, a native historian complains that the city had changed its aspect very considerably; and the past quarter of a century has materially altered the face of the city; but here and there, however, a narrow street, darkened by solemn-looking houses, their top stories often projecting over the lower ones, gives at least a glimpse into former centuries; or an extensive garden, with its ancient trees and sombre shrubbery, its high wall, strong gate, and fortress-like dwelling, carries us back in thought to the days when Chivalry was young, when the same man could be merchant, diplomate, warrior, and scholar; to the days when the human mind entered upon new fields of activity, and was quickened with renewed vigor to the doing of great deeds, the creation of great works. We are told that there were in the city one hundred and thirty-eight gardens, and fifty open places or squares, whose presence compensated very largely for the narrowness of the streets. Those streets, moreover, were paved and decently drained, at a time when the streets of London and Paris were in worse condition than the average country road of to-day. As early as the year 1236, we read that they were paving *all* the streets, as only the principal ones had been paved up to that date. Some of the streets were even provided with sewers,—a municipal luxury which we are apt to regard as belonging either to very ancient or very modern times, but not to the thirteenth century; and for the oversight of the streets and sewers a special magistracy was instituted. The open squares, however, were only partially paved, and most of them still remain so to this day. The modern idea of lighting the streets at night had not then received attention; and the only substitute for it was in such light as was afforded by the little oil lamps that were hung before the pictures of Christ and the saints, which adorned the walls of many houses. The city fathers seem to have appreciated, indeed, the usefulness of even this weak attempt to banish the darkness of night, and imposed a heavy penalty on any who should disturb the lamps. On special occasions, as during the visit of King Charles VIII. of France, or at times of great public excitement, they ordered all the citizens to keep lights burning in their windows during the night. Many of the streets and squares yet retain their ancient names, and more or less of their ancient surroundings; so that it requires but a little play of the imagination to picture to one's self some of the scenes of those olden days,—for instance, a political mass meeting on the Piazza della Signoria, a joust or a game of ball on the Piazza Santa Croce, a race of gilded and colored chariots on the Piazza di Santa Maria Novella, etc.

Of all Florentine buildings the most famous is without doubt its world-renowned cathedral, which is not even yet completed, nearly six hundred years after its foundation. The original plan was that of Arnolfo, to whose genius we owe also the Palazzo Vecchio and the church and cloisters of S. Croce. The wonderful cupola, of an octagonal form, is justly ascribed to its creator, Brunelleschi; but its original ground plan is that of Arnolfo, who constructed the foundations so perfectly that they served unaltered for the gigantic dome a later master erected upon them. Begun in the year 1294, it was not till 1436 that the vast edifice was ready for consecration; and on the 25th day of March of that year, which was New Year's Day to the then Florentines, Pope Eugene IV., assisted by many cardinals and bishops, celebrated the first mass at the high altar. Throughout the entire distance from the steps of Santa Maria Novella, where the pope resided, to those of the cathedral, there was erected a platform, "rich with rugs and every magnificence," on which these princes of the church, escorted by princes and ambassadors of many lands, walked in solemn procession to the dedication of this wonderful edifice. Almost a century and a half previous, the priors of the city had commissioned the said Arnolfo to make the designs "with the most exalted and most prodigal magnificence, in order that the industry and power of men may never create or undertake anything whatsoever more vast and more beautiful." The desire which animated these city fathers of the thirteenth century to issue such a remarkable commission was, in their own words, to make their public works "correspond to the noble [city's] soul which is composed of the souls of all its citizens." Has the much-vaunted progress of civilization during the six centuries that have since passed carried us so far beyond either the sentiments or the work of those men? The façade of the cathedral is a work of our day, which owes its inception to the fact that Florence was for a time the capital of new Italy, and it was felt to be a shame that this magnificent structure should be left without a corresponding front; so a supreme effort was made to collect the necessary money, the plans of de Fabris were adopted, and the work brought to a most successful conclusion.

Opposite the main door of the cathedral stand the time-stained but ever beautiful gates of Ghiberti, which Michael Angelo thought worthy to be the gates of Paradise. They close the principal but rarely used entrance of the temple of St. John the Baptist, the city's patron saint. This is the oldest Christian edifice of the city, dating possibly from the fifth century, and built certainly not later than the eighth; and stands perhaps, as some suppose, on the foundation of an ancient temple of Mars. Here the passing generations of Florence, the famous and the unknown, the wise and the ignorant, have been baptised into the universal family of Christ. Of churches, there were more than a hundred in the city, many of which remain but little changed to our day. Chief among these are Santa Croce, with its tombs of the great; Santa Maria Novella, with the storied walls of its famous chapels and associated in our minds with the residence of the popes and other distinguished guests of the city; also San Lorenzo, the resting place of the Medici, with walls of precious marbles, and containing the still more valuable work of Michael Angelo. The use of the churches was not confined, however, to repeating the sacred offices. The marble walls of the great cathedral, for instance, if they could speak, might tell us not only of chanted masses, or of Savonarola's fiery sermons, but also of political meetings, of curious festivals, of a great poetical contest,—and of deeds of blood. There was a line drawn between the forms of religion and its spirit. Theory and practice were at least different from each other, if they were not inimical the one to the other; and the various uses, ecclesiastical and profane, to which the churches were put, was but a reflex of the mental condition of the people.

Though the churches were largely in the majority, there were not lacking in the city fine public buildings devoted exclusively to secular uses. In the front rank of these must be placed one of the grandest products of Florentine architecture, which yet stands, and still incomplete,—but ever majestic in its simplicity, strength and grandeur. This is the Palazzo Vecchio, or ancient official residence of the city fathers. From its lofty tower still peal forth the deep-toned voices of the ancient bells, which, according to the manner of their ringing, either announced the time of day, or summoned the officials to their duties, or called the citizens unarmed to the consideration of municipal affairs; or, with arms in hand, brought them together for the defense of their city. How well the effect of such a summons to arms was understood, may be perhaps best illustrated by the story of Gino Capponi's famous answer to King Charles VIII. of France, who threatened the Florentines, in case they should refuse to sign a proposed treaty, to summon his soldiers by the beating of the drums. Capponi thereupon seized the offensive manuscript and tore it in pieces before the king's eyes, and replied, "And we will ring our bells,"—thereby bringing the king at once to a more pacific view. At that time there stood in front of the palace a broad platform, known as the *ringhiera*, where the city fathers appeared when they had communications to make to the body of citizens. This however was removed in the early part of the present century, during the Napoleonic régime.

At right angles to the principal front of the Palazzo Vecchio is the famous Loggia de' Lanzi, now filled with precious works of art, which appear to belong there so naturally that it is difficult to realize the fact that those mighty and graceful arches, and their beautifully ornamented panels were built for so prosaic a purpose as to afford shelter from the weather to the city officials when they must appear before the citizens at large.[1] But such, we are assured, is the truth ; and here took place in other days, stormy scenes of political discussions, and also other scenes, of festal gayety, pageantry, and pomp.

Another fine example of early Florentine architecture is the Palazzo del Podestâ, which served both as prison and as official residence of the foreign governor called *il podestà*. Recently restored, this ancient, fortress-like edifice now makes a fit setting for the National Museum, which contains a large collection of miscellaneous articles illustrative of the city's history. In the picturesque court, with its open corridors, is an imposing stone staircase leading to the second story ;—an example of a style of building once general throughout Tuscany, and which is only now disappearing from the mountain districts, where some of the houses to this day have no internal communication between the ground floor and the upper stories.

The river Arno, passing through the city, flows beneath four noble stone bridges. The Ponte Vecchio, is, as its name implies, the oldest of these, and was built about the middle of the fourteenth century. On either side it is lined with houses, which are usually three stories high, though of course very shallow. Every house has a shop on the ground floor ; and here are collected all kinds of odds and ends to attract the visiting stranger to buy. Over the roofs of these houses, on one side, runs a gallery which connects the Palazzo Vecchio with the Palazzo Pitti,—formerly a secret passage for the Medicean rulers of the city, but now the resting place of a vast number of most interesting portraits of the world's celebrities.

---

[1] Ammirato, 485.

In this remarkable community, whose untitled citizens ranked with princes of other lands, and often surpassed them in wealth and fame, it need not surprise us to find private houses on a royal scale. The Strozzi palace for instance is one of the finest examples of private architecture of a great age, and is still, after four centuries, occupied by a lineal descendant of the original builder. The Medici built earlier a handsome palace, and filled it with works of art and curios; but to their palace another race has given its present name, Riccardi; and it now serves for the offices and official residence of the prefect of Tuscany. Luca Pitti, one of the most pliable instruments of the Medici, commenced building perhaps the most magnificent palace ever undertaken by a private citizen of any land; but he was thrown from his high place, the workmen refused to continue labor on the structure of a fallen magnate, and he died neglected and unhappy. It was later completed by one of the Medici who married an heiress of the Pitti family; and finally became the fitting residence of united Italy's first king. Notwithstanding these vicissitudes it still retains the name of its proud and unfortunate founder; and now its untold treasures are among the greatest attractions of the city.

Human ingenuity has never yet explained satisfactorily why, in a certain place, at a certain time, there develops a race peculiarly fitted to lead mankind one step forward in the great march of civilization. That such is really the case, however, is the belief of all those who adopt a teleological view of history. So in the city, whose principal external features have just been mentioned, there lived, prospered, and increased a peculiar race, a chosen people, who led a great onward movement in the civilized world; opened modern eyes to see and appreciate the beauty of bygone civilizations, and created ideals for future generations to work out. Other cities were as rich, other communities more populous; other climates as good if not better; other races of men were as well formed, and the women of other places more beautiful. But here only was found that wonderful combination of all circumstances and conditions which produced a race of geniuses, of "universal men," they may well be called, who were great not only in one thing but in many branches of science and art. Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and a host of others illuminate their age and country with the dazzling light of their genius, which shines on through the centuries to show to future generations what man can be and do.

The most prominent characteristic of the race was a boundless energy, a restless activity, fully equal to that of the Americans of the present day. The Florentines maintain that the heat of summer there, which we are so apt to think debilitating, is not unhealthy, but the reverse; as sickness and death are in summer almost unknown there. In winter, however, they suffer from the cold; especially in their houses, which are built much more with a view to keeping cool in summer than warm in winter. Even to this day their primary school rooms are without fires; and, in cold weather, the children warm themselves as best they can, by frequent, simple gymnastics, directed by the teacher. Such a system is doubtless well calculated to provide for the survival of the fittest; for the weaklings soon go to their last account, and the survivors have physical strength; this, however, they are now but too apt to neglect later in life, amidst the many temptations to idleness. With unusual energy, the Florentines of the Renaissance combined just as remarkable individuality; so much so, that one of their own writers affirms that "twelve of them would never come together who were of one and the same opinion." This quality had its good effect in enabling them to produce so many works of originality, whereby they opened the way to the modern movement in art, literature, and science. On the other hand, this excessively developed individuality was a principal cause of the constant disagreement in the management of municipal affairs, and thus proved to be one of the chief factors in the final downfall and ruin of the city.

The Florentines as a race were extremely passionate, and influenced more by their feelings than by their judgment. Among them, indifferentism, which is but too frequently defended under the name of good form, was practically unknown. They were so many-sided in ability and so extreme in all things, that the judgments pronounced upon them, both by their own and foreign writers, have been various to the last degree. As a rule the most unfavorable judgments came from contemporaries who had suffered personally from the numerous fluctuations in the city politics; while nearly all of the more favorable opinions come from later investigators of Florentine history, who enjoy the privilege of seeing matters in truer perspective than contemporaries can possibly do; and who find accordingly that the good of the Florentine character outweighed its evil. In all things human, good and bad are intermingled; and they must therefore be judged according as the one or the other quality preponderates. We find Florence characterized, for instance, as a city fickle and restless, fond of talking, judging more by success than from motives, and of but little faith, unity, and courage. Pope Eugene the Fourth told Rinaldo degli Albizzi, that "among the entire crowd of his followers, there was not one citizen but would show that his nose was longer than his faith." The crowning evil of the national character was avarice. "At all times," we are told by a modern historian of great ability, "gold had been one of the gods of Florence; thanks to the Medici, it became the principal one." A courtier of the first Medicean duke is credited with saying to his lord: "All [the Florentines] are either avaricious or ambitious, and the greater part are proud, envious, and malicious." On the other hand, at a time when Italy was full of tyranny, strife, and bloodshed, the Florentines were recognized as being much less sanguinary than their neighbors. A foreign writer of that time expresses surprise that, after a party conflict, the victors were con[illegible] [illegible]e banishment of their enemies, instead [illegible] as was but too often the case in ot[illegible] period. A modern historian says that it is to the highest honor of the Florentines of that time that among them serious crimes were of rare occurrence; and accounts for this condition of affairs either for the reason that justice still existed in the city, or because the higher culture of the citizens "gave them another view as to laying hands criminally on the wheel of fortune."[1] In an age when "the archbishop Paolo Fregoso of Genua was doge, pirate, and cardinal,"[2] when a pope was party to a conspiracy to murder the rulers of a coveted city, and a priest undertook the execution of the bloody deed, almost on the very steps of the altar, at the moment of the elevation of the host,[3]—at such a time, was it not one of the highest virtues, to be comparatively free from one of the most prevailing evils of the day? That this virtue, however, was only comparative and not absolute, we shall have abundant opportunity of seeing.

The Florentines were "a nation of shop-keepers" if you will, but at the same time an aristocracy of intellect, offering an example "of the highest and most peculiar life of the world" at that time. They were accurate, even close in their business dealings, but magnificent in their generosity. Often rude in action, according to "the rusticity of the time," they were on the other hand pleasant in speech; and developed the sweetest and most musical language of the modern world. They were endowed with a wonderful spirit, acute in reasoning and creative in art. While industrious and frugal in private life, they possessed a public spiritedness, a true love of country, which prompted them to give largely of their means for the promotion of public works. In our age of easy travel, general peace, and almost universal migration, it is extremely difficult to understand the ardent love for the native city which animated the Florentines of those days.

---

[1] Burckhardt, *Cultur der Renaissance*, II, 222.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 325.

[3] See any full account of the conspiracy of the Pazzi.

Each political party, when in power, did its utmost to beautify the city and increase its greatness in the eyes of the world, continuing the work left unfinished by its banished rival; the unfortunate exiles dreamed of the bliss of again beholding their "*bella Firenze,*" and were ready to offer up wealth, life, and sometimes even honor itself, in order to return. As a modern Florentine has well said: "They were citizens first, then private individuals; and they recognized in every glory of their city a family interest."[1]

From such a race proceeded the leaven which was to leaven the civilization of Europe. From this diminutive territory there went out men toward the four winds of heaven, seeking wealth and knowledge; and hither they returned, bearing material and intellectual treasures of untold value. Here came together seekers after knowledge, from Orient and Occident, from north and south, and returned home bearing the glad tidings of the dawn of a new era in the world's history. From this same city there went forth a man to explore the marvels of a new-found land, who, through the beauty and force of his descriptions, gave his name to the New World.

It is naturally impossible to spring into the history of a country at a given period and understand it, without some knowledge of that which has gone before. As the flower is for botanist and artist alike, the principal part of the plant, so is the period of greatest material and intellectual activity in any country that of the most absorbing interest to the historian, who should as a botanist analyze the civilization under treatment, and as an artist, depict its beauties. But the botanist must examine also the root, stem, and leaves of his plant; and so must also the historian investigate the origin, growth and earlier institutions of the people, whose flowering period he wishes to describe. The life of the fifteenth century was the flower of Florentine civilization ; but before entering into the details of its analysis, it is necessary to take a summary view of the salient matters which preceded. The political evolution of the city was in principle of the same nature as the world has often seen,—an aristocracy, overturned by rebellion ; democracy, with more or less anarchy ; plutocracy, the result of the concentration of riches in few hands ; followed finally by the tyranny of the richest.

---

[1] Capponi.

Here the national life was confined to a small area, and its conditions were less complicated than in the great nations of to-day ; and here stood deep thinkers, with their fingers constantly on the national pulse, who have recorded for the first time in the history of the modern world, observations which afford an insight into the causes and effects of national movements. Just as a pathologist, through a study of simpler organisms, arrives at a better understanding of the conditions of health and disease in man, so can the historian and statesman, by a study of the history of smaller communities, gain a more perfect knowledge of the conditions of progress and retrogression in the more complicated body politic. Therefore, as there are many points of similarity between the Florentines of the Renaissance and the Americans of to-day, the history of this Italian commonwealth is of especial value to us.

For the time when Florence was but a member of the Holy Roman Empire, we shall not stop to examine its history. At the very close of the twelfth century, on the death of the Emperor Henry VI., his brother Philip, whom he had created Duke of Tuscany, left Italy ; and Florence was born into an independent existence. As to the details of the government which was then instituted, we are not informed ; but in name at least, there was no great change in the officers. The duke was gone, and in his place ruled a body of men under the name of consuls, whose number varied, but never exceeded twelve. The chief judicial officer bore the title of *podestà*, and was called from out another city and must be of noble birth. Before long there sprang into existence the celebrated political parties, Guelph and Ghibelline, whose dissensions produced unbounded evil for the community. The Guelph looked to the Pope as the highest source of all dignity and authority, while the Ghibelline wished the Emperor to occupy the pinnacle of earthly power. However, they were virtually but the then representatives of the two great classes which are to be found in every community, and between which there exists what Emerson calls "the primal antagonism." The one desires a large measure of local freedom with opportunity for untrammeled development, including generally a tendency to radicalism; the other works for personal aggrandizement under the aegis of a powerful central government, usually combined with a desire for the preservation of old forms and ceremonies, and consequently with general conservative tendencies. Modern political parties decide their differences at the ballot box, and after the victory of one or the other, they generally live in peace if not in harmony together; but the Florentine of the Renaissance could not brook the presence of a political rival, and the victor often banished his defeated opponent. The contests were sometimes even waged with arms, and followed by the plunder or confiscation of the property of the defeated party leaders.

After changes too numerous to detail, the Guelphs finally gained the permanent ascendency. In the ranks of that party, however, existed also the more and the less conservative elements; and the old contest, carried on however in greater moderation, was renewed, while the popular party gained ever more and more ground. The populace has never been an independent thinker, and so follows one or the other set of political leaders, according as it is attracted by flattery, or by promises of legislation favorable to itself, or by gold. The name of Liberty is sweet to all ears save those of tyrants; but how much tyranny has been exercised under the pretext of promoting liberty, is a theme worthy of carefu[illegible] tion. The Florentine Guelphs were the party of [illegible] the leaders of both of its divisions employed this [illegible] to tickle the ears of the masses, while both were equally striving to gain a personal supremacy. The Medici family for several generations possessed the remarkable ability of flattering the populace gracefully, promising favorable legislation in a convincing manner, and dazzling all by a display and liberal use of the largest fortune of the age. In this way they succeeded in binding hand and foot, with chains of gold, a people who accepted them as leaders, believing them to be personal ornaments to the community, and who learned the true nature of their influence only when it was too late to shake them off. Thus the plutocracy passed into tyranny; and from the time of that change, Florentine history sinks gradually to the common level—the Samson that had moved the world of art and letters falls to sleep at the feet of Delilah, who is the personification of the material temptations of man, as Satan is of the spiritual.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Florentine wealth increased in an extraordinary degree. Earlier generations had compelled the powerful barons of the district to live in the city; and even yet the exercise of the rights of citizenship was dependent on having a residence there. The influx of outsiders was, however, much more owing to the attractions offered by the city, whether in business, profession, or pleasure, than to compulsion. The Medici became indeed the richest of all the families of the time, but the tax-rolls show that there were also other colossal fortunes in Florence which nearly equalled theirs.

The situation of the city is not favorable to the natural growth of commerce, especially under the conditions which preceded the building of railroads. At a considerable distance from the sea, on a river navigable only for very small craft, and surrounded by hills which rendered difficult the construction of good roads,—the fact that the city did prosper so marvellously is in itself proof of the remarkable energy and ability of its people. They needed above all things a sea-port, and to obtain a good one they waged some of their most exhausting wars. Their principal wealth, however, came through their financial operations, which extended throughout Europe, and penetrated even to Morocco and the Orient. Their manufactures also, especially of wool and silk, brought in enormous returns, and made not only the fortunes but also, in one famous case at least, the name of the families engaged in them. Their superiority over the rest of Christendom in these pursuits was but one side of that remarkable, universal talent which is the most astonishing feature of the Florentine life of that age. With the hardihood of youth, they were not only ready but eager to engage in new enterprises, whether at home or abroad. Many Florentines laid the foundation of their fortunes far distant from their native city; and, like many a European of to-day who accumulates property in America, they were glad to return with their fortune to pass the remainder of their days amid the familiar scenes and friends of youth. Notwithstanding all the adverse criticism heaped upon them by their own writers, the Florentine merchants as a body must have been men of unusual integrity according to the standard of the business men of other countries at that time; for their reputation throughout the then commercial world stood high. As a result of their energy and ability, riches poured into their coffers,—a mighty stream of gold, in the use of which they showed so much judgment, that the after world has feasted to our day, and for centuries to come, will probably continue to feast without satiety on the good things which they caused to be made, and left behind them.

Of all the legacies for which we have to thank Florence, none are so well known and so universally recognized as the treasures of art created by her sons, many of which yet remain within her walls, the marvel and delight of all who behold them. As the Florentines were ready to try experiments in politics, manufactures, and commerce, so also in all branches of the fine arts they tried experiments, left the old, [illegible] paths of their forefathers, and created something [illegible] useful, and beautiful for themselves. [illegible] art [illegible] time of the Roman Empire to Cimabue had made comparatively little progress; but a son of the Florentine fields was to start a revolution which should lead to the production of some of the most marvellous works which have proceeded from the hand of man.

The idea that the fine arts are more successfully cultivated under the patronage of princes than under republican rule is very widespread, and is occasionally accepted almost as a dogma; but the history of Athens and of Florence teaches us without any doubt that the two most artistic epochs in the history of the world have had their rise in republics. The age of Pericles is often mentioned as though Pericles had been the absolute ruler of Athens during the period when that city was being adorned with the most celebrated works of art which the world has ever produced; while the fact is, that he in reality occupied much of the time but secondary positions under the government, and had almost constant, at times, bitter opposition; and it was only by his marvellous powers of argument and persuasion that he was enabled to guide an excitable and fickle populace, in the work which has made their name great in the world for more than two thousand years. So also in Florence. Some writers, dazzled by the splendors of the Medici, entirely lose sight of the fact that both Dante and Petrarch were dead before the Medici were even heard of, and that the greatest works, at least in architecture, were all begun long before they were leaders in Florentine affairs. That family did much, yes very much, for the advancement of art and letters; but they did not do all or nearly all that was done in Florence. They encouraged as a rule only those who would be subservient to them; the others they ignored or even drove out of the city. Some of the very best of the sons of Florence they did not employ, preferring the work of men since recognized as of less merit; while many of the works of the greater, we owe to the encouragement of other Florentines or of other cities. A discussion of the history of art would not be in keeping here;

but in a study of Florentine life, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the spirit of art, the sense for and love of the beautiful, existed in the city at large; and it is to the people, not to any one family, that we must render homage and thanks for what they did in advancing the march of civilization.

Though civil discord and foreign war were very frequent, Florentine life is nevertheless an illustration rather of what Herbert Spencer calls the commercial stage of civilization, than of the warlike period. Her citizens were above all things merchants, and were generally much more willing to pay to avoid a war than to conduct one. They strove for glory, not in feats of arms, but in literary contests and in peaceful emulation in the encouragement of learning and the fine arts. In her public offices were employed men of literary distinction, whose official papers became models of form and style for other nations; on diplomatic missions were sent her most brilliant sons, whose address and learning made them acceptable guests at all the courts of Europe. Nor was it unusual for Florentines to take service under foreign powers, and there occupy positions of the gravest responsibility. As to the extent of such practice, it is only necessary to recall to mind the celebrated anecdote of the embassies which came to Rome from all nations to congratulate Pope Boniface VIII. on the occasion of his great jubilee in the year 1300. The chiefs of so many of these embassies were Florentines, that His Holiness remarked: "The Florentines are the fifth element." With France the relations of Florence were particularly intimate, even long before a daughter of the Medici occupied a seat on its royal throne; and a modern French historian says of the Florentines, in consequence, that they were altogether French. The debts of an English king caused the financial ruin of two of the greatest Florentine banking houses, and the widespread financial distress which followed. One of England's royal sons was a student at th Florentine university; and other students of the same institution were the first to carry a knowledge of the Greek language to an English seat of learning. One of these was John Colet, who, on his return, "at once began to lecture at Oxford on St. Paul's Epistles, . . . quoting Plato and Pico [della Mirandola] and Ficino more than them."[1] In social science there are no means of measuring, as in physics, cause and effect; for the conditions of the problem are too intricate and the number of unknown elements too great, to permit us to arrive at even a proximate solution. Just how much influence, then, Florence has exercised on the development of modern civilization, we are unable to say; but that it has been great, yea immeasurable, who can deny? Then let us love her, as the mother of much that is best in modern thought; let us study her more and more, as an inexhaustible source of instruction, helpful amidst the complications and trials of modern life.

---

[1] Frederic Seebohm's *The era of the Protestant Reformation*, p. 79.

II.

The Government.

Though called a republic from the time of its freedom of direct control of the Empire, Florence never gave the privileges of citizenship to all of its adult male population; or, in other words, never adopted the principle of universal suffrage. Woman was considered of so little importance politically that she may be left out of a description of the affairs of state. The whole body of inhabitants was divided into three classes; the *grandi* or nobles, the *popolani* or men of affairs, and the *popolino* or plebs.[1] The first class was made up principally of powerful barons, most of whom in the early days inhabited castles in Florentine territory, where they passed the greater part of their time, rather than in the city; until they were finally compelled by law or conquest to abandon their strongholds and move to the city. Some of these feudal castles were destroyed and others were garrisoned by the municipality for public defense. The original grandi were largely of Teutonic origin, the descendants of the Goths and other Teutonic invaders who, from age to age, overran Italy. About the middle of the fourteenth century, the grandi were excluded from the power of holding certain offices. Some of them, retaining the title of count, still remained in the country and became farmers; while about five hundred, having ingratiated themselves into the good will of the people, were raised out of the rank of nobles to the powers of citizenship.

---

[1] This is the usual nomenclature; but Cavalcanti gives another which seems reasonable, namely, grandi, mercatanti or merchants, and artefici or artizans. (I, 622.)

Popolani signifies literally, belonging to the people; that was, to the ruling class, or those having full rights of citizenship (after 1292). The leaders of the popolani, called *popolani grassi* or fat or rich citizens, were the men of importance in the general affairs of the city; and as they were compelled to be, in the early times at least, members of one or other of the guilds, and as such were principally business men, merchant prince and political leader grew to be almost synonymous terms. These merchant princes, being the actual rulers of the city, it is the account of their good and evil fortunes, their success and their banishment, which makes up the largest part of the political history of this commonwealth. They were not indeed the exclusive possessors of the privileges of citizenship, but their influence was paramount upon almost all important occasions; and it was they who reaped the principal benefits or suffered the severest punishments of a revolution in Florentine politics.

Popolino is a word still in use among the Florentines to designate the petty trades-people and the laboring classes. Whether or not these were granted the privileges of citizenship during the Renaissance depended as much upon the regulations of the separate guilds as upon any general law of the community; for although the law decided which guilds should take part in the government of the city, each guild was practically independent in making provisions as to the admission of members into its own ranks; and the privileges of citizenship were only to be enjoyed by the members of certain guilds. However, after the year 1378, the guilds gradually declined in importance; and from that time on, the population may be regarded as being divided into but two classes, namely, the wealthy burgesses (*haute bourgeoisie*) and the common people.[1]

---

[1] Thomas, *Revolutions Florentines*, 172.

At the revival of Florentine liberties, in 1494, the guilds were still recognized in making up the lists of citizens eligible to office; for in one *borsa* were placed the names of the citizens belonging to the major guilds, in another, of the members of the minor guilds.[1]

Some knowledge of the guilds is therefore a condition precedent to the understanding of the machinery of Florentine government. Of the *Arti,* as the Florentines called their guilds, there were two main divisions, called respectively the *Arti maggiori,* or greater guilds, and the *Arti minori,* or lesser ones. The number of the former was generally seven, and included the richest men and the principal lines of business in the city, as well as those who chose to follow the professions of law and medicine.[2] The number of minor guilds varied at different times from five to twenty-one, according to the fluctuations of politics. Many of the least important trades were usually under a kind of subjection to other trades with which their work was in some measure allied. Thus for instance the wool guild numbered at one time among its subjects some twenty-five of the small trades with which it had to do; and for the workers therein, it determined the rates of wages, and decided legal disputes. When from time to time some of the subject trades succeeded in gaining their independence, they were numbered among the minor guilds. However, they were almost as often forced back into subjection; and in this manner were caused the variations in the number of the minor arts, which at first appear so strange to the historian. The equilibrium seems to have been best established when the minor arts numbered fourteen, which they did during long periods of time.

---

[1] Giucciardini, *Regimento,* 228.

[2] Details as to the names and nature of the guilds will be found in the chapter on Commerce and Industry. Here they are considered only in their connection with the government.

Each guild had its own captain or consul, and other officers, according to its wealth and dignity in the community. Though the city was organized into sixths or *sesti* at one time, and quarters at another period, for administrative purposes, the guild remained for a long time the basis of organization of the citizens on almost all important occasions, whether of peace or war. Each guild was practically a republic within itself, and elected its own officers, irrespective of communal influence; though a law of 1324 forbade them to elect officers oftener than once a year.[1] But those officers when elected had certain rights and duties in the government of the community. Villani (V, 27) tells us that in the year 1311 the members of the wool guild were so divided among themselves over the election of a consul, that they almost brought about a general uprising in the city. When public matters of grave import were to be determined, there were seventy-two trades whose consuls had the right to vote on them.[2]

Under all ordinary circumstances the practical directors of the affairs of Florence were the members of a committee called the *Signoria*. They were at first known as *Priori*, or priors, that is the chief men, or elected, as Villani (III, 142) interprets it. Later they received the title of *Signori*, or lords. In 1458 it was changed to *Priori di libertà*, Priors of liberty, at a time when Florentine liberty was fast disappearing under the subtle innovations of the Medici. They held office but two months. The manner of selection for the office was altered from time to time. Sometimes it was drawing by lot, sometimes by election. In the case of drawing by lot, the names of all those eligible to the office were placed in a strong box, called *borsa*, which was provided with three keys; and these were entrusted to as many different persons. When the term of those in office was about to expire, the box was brought out and opened in the presence of the priors and of the whole body of citizens; and the names drawn out one at a time. As there were a number of minor conditions to be regarded in making up the signoria, as to guild and section of the city to be represented, and also as to relationship among members, not every one whose name was drawn could enter the signoria; and a name once drawn was not returned to the box, until an entire new list was made, which might be years hence. Near relatives were not allowed to sit in the signoria at the same time; and in the case of father and son, or of brothers, not within two years of each other. However, this must be understood of the earlier period; for after the Medicean influence was established, many of the old rules became dead letters.

---

[1] Villani, V, 253.

[2] Capponi, II, 9.

The Palazzo Vecchio was built by the city to enable the priors to live there together during their term of office. Here each had his own private quarters; but they ate at the same table, which was supplied with meat and drink and service at the public expense. The general cost of their maintenance was 5,075 florins per year, while the table alone cost 2,430 florins.[1] They were not allowed to leave the building except under rigid conditions, as they were supposed to be ready to transact the public business at any hour of the day or night. Their duties were of such a general nature, that this body reminds one more of a board of directors of a great modern corporation than of the governing body of a city. They decided largely matters of war and peace; they sent and received ambassadors, entertained the city's distinguished guests, and had some legislative powers. But in grave matters their decisions must be ratified by other bodies; and in extreme cases, they were apt to appeal to the whole body of citizens for advice, or for the delegation of special powers. At times they exercised judicial powers, though they were also the executors of their own decrees. They possessed besides, general supervision of the public works of the entire Florentine territory, much of which p[illegible] was however delegated to minor bodies for the carrying out of details.

---

[1] Varchi, II, 119.

At first the priors were equal among themselves, and the representatives of the highest dignity as well as of the highest power in the state. However in the year 1293 they were given a chief, with the title of *Gonfaloniere di giustizia,* or Banneret of justice. To his keeping was entrusted the standard of the city, which was a white flag having in the centre a red cross, with arms of equal length. He occupied the head of the table at the palace, during the two months of his residence there, headed the priors on occasions of state and ceremony, and presided at public meetings. Under his command were placed 1000 foot soldiers, evidently intended to quell internal disturbances; for they do not seem to have been employed in war, although their number was afterwards raised to 2000, and still later to 4000. Five hundred masons and carpenters were added to this body guard, if the term may be applied, whose chief employment appears to have been to destroy the houses of those who had made themselves obnoxious to the government. There were also fifty Picconieri, who were "armed with good picks and axes and other utensils."

The gonfaloniere di giustizia must be from a different section of the city each time, and in his room of the palace the standard of the city was kept. When there was public danger, and he, bearing the standard, mounted on horseback, the entire military contingent of the city was required to follow him and obey his orders. The holding of this office was of such moment to the Florentines, that their standing in the community seems to have been largely measured by the number of times the office had been occupied by members of their families. The time of greatest power of this office was, like in so many other cases in this world, just precedent to its final downfall. In 1502 Piero Soderini, whose family had taken a conspicuous part in the affairs of the city for a very long time, was elected gonfaloniere for life, and entered on the fulfilment of his official duties with much energy and ability. For ten years he governed the city, "with the best constitution it ever possessed;" but he was deposed by the Medici returning in triumph, and had safe conduct without the city. Thus practically ended the glory of this office, which had existed for more than two centuries, with only one year's interruption. In reality the office was not abolished until twenty years later; when on the first of May, 1532, Giovan Francesco de' Nobili, the 1372d gonfaloniere di giustizia, gave up his office, as the first Medicean duke took possession of the public palace for his official residence.

The office which concentrated the most power in the hands of one man was that of the Podestà, an office which is first mentioned in 1184, and which continued with but little interruption until 1502. At first the podestà was considered as in some measure representing the emperor, whose subjects the Florentines continued to be, theoretically, long years after they had become in reality free. The podestà must be a *forestiere* or foreigner, a Guelph, of noble birth or else a doctor of the laws, and not a subject of any prince; and he must come from a place at least fifty miles distant from Florence, later from at least sixty miles. To him was entrusted the "right of the sword" as it was termed, that is the right to wield the sword of justice. His costume consisted of a long robe, which might be of white, yellow, or of gold brocade; and of a red *beretta*, or official cap. On the day of San Giovanni he went with an offering to the church of the city's patron saint; on the day of Pentecost he presented the insignia of military power to the *sesti* or sixths of the city; and he was the presiding officer at the meetings of certain councils, which will presently receive attention. He was elected, at first for one year, later for only six months, by a union of councils known as the *Consigli del comune*, or rather by electors chosen by them. Every elector was at liberty to propose one candidate; and after the nominations. the votes were taken. From the four candidate [illegible] the largest number of votes, the podestà was to [illegible] the one receiving the highest number, getting the first invitation to fill the office. If he did not accept, an invitation was then sent to the one who had received the next highest number, and so on. His official residence was at first in the bishop's palace, but afterwards in the Palazzo del comune, as it was originally called, though later known as the Palazzo del podestà, also as the Bargello. The laws of the early part of the fifteenth century provided that, having once occupied the office, the same individual was not eligible again for at least ten years, except upon the vote of the whole body of citizens. And the same rule held good in regard to his near relatives and the judges who accompanied him. Every podestà must bring with him four doctors of laws and sixteen notaries, besides guards, bailiffs, etc. And he received a large stipulated salary, out of which he was to pay all these subordinates. In the beginning of the fourteenth century his remuneration amounted to 15,240 lire, at which period the office was considered one of the greatest dignity. As time went on, however, other offices began to infringe on the dignity of the podestà; and instead of possessing the right of the sword, he was later looked upon as "a mere salaried judge;" and his salary was reduced accordingly; being at one time but 6,000 lire per annum; and still later, when the office was held for only six months, it was but 2,300 lire. His chief duties were those connected with the administration of justice. The office continued in existence, though with ever increasing loss of dignity, until the election of Piero Soderini to the office of gonfaloniere for life; and on the day when he entered upon office, the last podestà retired from Florence.[1]

The second director of the government of Florence was called the *Capitano del popolo*, or Captain of the people; and was chosen by the electors of the council of the people, and subject to the same conditions of birth, domicile, etc., as the podestà. The office was not instituted until the year 1250, on the occasion of a popular uprising against the Ghibellines, when the government of the city was entrusted to Uberto da Lucca, to whom this title was given; and who was to be assisted by a council of twelve *Anziani*, or presbyters. The standard of his office was the same as was afterwards placed in the hands of the gonfaloniere di giustizia, on the creation of that office. During the first quarter of the fourteenth century the office was for a time abolished, when the community placed itself under the power of Robert, King of Naples. It was revived in 1322, but with diminished powers, in as much as the incumbent was made removable for mal-administration, by the gonfaloniere, priors, and anziani or *Buonuomini*. The capitano was to provide a certain number of soldiers as guard to the signoria; and for himself and them he received a salary of 5,200 lire per annum in the early days; later, only 2,500. To this office was appended at various times other titles, such as *Capitano della massa de' Guelfi*, Captain of the body of Guelphs; *Capitano di Firenze e consigliere di pace*, Captain of Florence and councillor of peace; *Difensore dell' arti*, Defender of the guilds. Among his duties may be mentioned, presiding at the meetings of certain councils, commanding the city troops on occasion, and the exercise of important judicial functions, sometimes in criminal cases, but generally in civil ones, and especially those arising out of disputes as to taxation. Furthermore he was head of what might be styled the bureau of taxation; for under him were united the offices for appraising property, for levying and collecting taxes, for imposing and collecting fines for the non-payment of taxes, etc. Under certain circumstances he was commander of all the military forces of the city; and even when the podestà assumed chief command, the forces the first three sesti were entrusted to the command of capitano. His official residence was at first in the Casa

---

[1] The name was retained, however, for one member of the Council of justice, which was erected by a law of even date, and which was to consist of five foreign doctors of laws. (Guicciardini, *Storia*, 250.)

Tizzini, which was destroyed in a great conflagration of about 1305; after which he occupied a portion of the Bargello. About 1433 his power was at its highest; from which time it gradually declined, until we find the office spoken of a mere "captaincy of the palace soldiers." It was finally abolished by the influence of Giuliano de' Medici, about 1475, and an ordinary judgeship substituted for it.

Considering the fact that Florence governed but a small territory, and that the conditions of life there were comparatively simple, one is naturally surprised at the complication of the system of legislation which this people invented, in the vain endeavor to establish an equilibrium between the various forces of government. Three *Rettori* or directors, as the podestà, and the capitano del popolo, and the esecutore were called, were the executive heads of the government; and their respective functions not unfrequently coincided and even conflicted.

The principal powers of legislation resided in several councils, the number and functions of which varied from time to time. It will therefore be well to commence with a description of those which were instituted at an early period; for the later ones were in effect only modifications of them. There still exists an anonymous account of the condition of the government toward the close of the thirteenth century, from which we may derive much valuable information. Under the presidency of the capitano del popolo there sat two councils, which were rather two branches of the same; for they met at the same time, in the same building, namely, the church of San Piero Schiereggio (later spelled Scheraggio);[1] and a proposition passed by the smaller body was brought immediately before the larger.[2] This larger body was composed of one hundred members, of whom twenty came from Oltrarno, twenty from the sesto of San Piero Schiereggio, and fifteen from each of the other sesti or sixths into which the city was divided. This council was usually called *Consiglio del cento,* or Council of one hundred; but was known also by other names, as *Consiglio segreto del popolo,* Secret council of the people; *Consiglio del capitano,* captain's council, etc. The smaller division was called *Consiglio di credenza,* council of credit; and was composed of six members from each sesto, and twenty-five members at large. The power of these two bodies extended to the appropriation of one hundred lire monthly; but the spending of the same was in the hands of the priors; who however were not permitted to give out more than twenty-five lire for any one *partita* or object. The consiglio del popolo had indeed one important function which must not be overlooked, and that was the election of almost all the subordinate officers by whom the merely administrative work of the state was done.

---

[1] This church was situated near the Palazzo Vecchio, and was destroyed when the Via Ghibellina was widened.

[2] The deliberations of the larger body were at least in the presence of the smaller, and may have been with its participation.

Under the general name of *Consiglio del comune* were united four sub-councils, whose separate functions are not clearly defined. The first was the *Consiglio dei trecento* or Council of three hundred, consisting of fifty members from each sesto. The second was the *Consiglio dei novanta,* or Council of ninety, with fifteen members from each sesto. Both of these met in the Bargello, and were presided over by the podestà in person. The third of the sub-councils was called *Consiglio delle capitudine delle sette maggiori arti,* or Council of the heads of the seven major guilds, and was summoned whenever new taxes were to be levied, or any other matter considered, which would seriously affect commerce and trade. This council elected every six months two men as overseers of the mint, one from the guild of Calimala, the other from the guild of bankers and money changers. In conjunction with the priors, they elected also six citizens and one foreigner, to have oversight of the supply of provisions. These were called the judge and six "*della Biada,*" of the grain. The judge held office for six months, the six citizens for but two months. At all times they attended to the importation of grain; and in seasons of scarcity and distress they arranged civic festivals, "for the sake of not adding affliction to the afflicted," as it is expressed in the quaint language of the period. *Buonuomini* or good men, was the designation applied to the fourth sub-council of the consiglio del comune; and they, twelve in number, acted as especial counsellors to the signoria in all grave matters, being apparently the successors of the anziani or presbyters of earlier days. As the judicial sovereignty, or power of the sword, was in the hands of the podestà, so the legislative sovereignty, or taxing power, was entrusted to these councils. The members thereof were elected by the complicated co-operation of the signoria, the podestà, the capitano del popolo, and certain *richiesti*,[1] or persons especially invited to that end from each sesto. The councillors held office for one year. No one could be a member of more than one of these councils at the same time; and near relatives were not only prohibited from being members of the same council at the same time, but there must elapse at least one year between the retirement of one and the installation of another. Every member must be at least twenty-five years of age.

Each sub-council seems to have exercised independent power over certain matters not involving an expenditure of more than one hundred lire; but in more weighty matters, the vote of all four appears to have been necessary for a final decision; and if a measure was defeated in any one of the councils, it could not be proposed again until after the entrance of a new signoria into office. All measures had to pass first through the hands of the signoria, of the podestà, and of the capitano del popolo. The parliamentary rules of procedure were somewhat strange, as compared with those of governing bodies of our day. All the members must be present before the opening of the sitting; and they could not leave afterwards without permission, apparently of the presiding officer. Not more than four speeches were allowed on any one subject; and every speech must be made from the "customary and prescribed place;" and must be confined to the subject under consideration. No one was permitted to annoy or interrupt the speaker, or commence speaking until his predecessor had finished. Two methods of voting were in use, one of which was by rising, in which case they differed from our custom; for the opponents to a motion rose, and the ayes remained seated. In cases of importance, where a secret ballot was considered desirable, the second method of voting was adopted. For this a particolored, double box was provided, with balls for voting; and each member dropped a ball into the red or the white side of the box, according as he favored or opposed the measure under consideration. One of their rules forbade the introduction of the same bill in the consiglio del popolo and in the consiglio del comune on the same day. Records of all proceedings were kept by a *Notary of reforms*, as he was called, who was elected by the consiglio del comune for one year, and might be re-elected. He also must be a foreigner, and not from the same place as the podestà or the capitano del popolo. In all ordinary matters, a majority vote was sufficient to pass a measure; but in any matter "in derogation of the Statuti," or fundamental laws, or constitution, as we would express it, a vote of four-fifths of those present in every one of the sub-councils was necessary.

---

[1] Such men were also designated by the terms *Arroti* and *Aggiunti*, signifying adjuncts, or persons added to the regular governing body.

Once in two months there was a meeting of what was called the *Parlamento generale* or *Consiglio pubblico*, which was composed of the three rettori, the signoria, all the councils, and the twelve consuls of the guilds. The meeting took place in the church of Santa Reparata,[1] fifteen days after the installation of the new priors, and was held in the presence of all the people. Here each captain and consul had the right to propose "all that he believed to be for the good of the community." This parliament seems to have fallen gradually into desuetude; for no mention of it appears in the later accounts of municipal affairs, and no statement of its formal abolition has been noticed.

---

[1] This was the name of the old church which occupied the site of the present cathedral.

In 1378, after the uprising of the *Ciompi* or woolcarders, the consiglio del popolo was reformed, along with many other of the institutions of the city, and thereafter was composed of forty members from each quarter. It continued to take part in the regulation of affairs, until finally abolished by the influence of the Medici a century later. The consiglio del comune went through the same experience, having ten grandi added to its membership from each quarter in 1378, with equal representation from the major and minor guilds; and being abolished at the same time as the consiglio del popolo, the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The consiglio del cento, which at first was a component part of the consiglio del popolo, seems to have been afterwards separate from it, although we find no formal declaration to that effect; for notwithstanding the fact that the greater council was abolished, as we have seen, about 1475, the council of one hundred was in existence until the day of the flight of Piero de' Medici; but was then at once abolished, in the reforms undertaken on the restitution of the communal liberties. When the Medici again returned to power in 1512, this council was revived, with power to "decree outlay and laws," as it is rather singularly expressed. For the Medici, in becoming in name as well as in fact rulers of Florence, retained naturally a large portion of the administrative machinery of the old government.

In February, 1292–3, was passed the first of a famous series of laws known as the *Ordinamenti della giustizia*, Ordinances of justice, which were aimed at the suppression of the power of the nobles. A noble, offending any of the popolani, should receive double the ordinary punishment for such an offense, and in certain cases his dwelling should be despoiled. Relatives among the nobles were held responsible for the crimes of each other. On the other hand the nobles could not bring suit, bear witness, or "stand in judgment" against the popolani, without the consent of the priors. From time to time these ordinances were strengthened, until they became a most powerful instrument of tyranny in the hands of the popular party. In the records of the trials under these laws, the name of Dante Alighieri appears twice, in the year 1301. It was for the special execution of these laws that the office of gonfaloniere di giustizia was instituted; but as that officer, being a Florentine, was not found to answer the requirements perfectly, a new office was created in the year 1306, called the *Esecutore degli ordini della giustizia*, Executor of the ordinances of justice, whose duties were "to make inquiries and proceed against the nobles who should offend against the popolani." The same rules of eligibility applied to this office as to those of podestà and captain of the people.[1]

In 1429 a law was passed creating the office of *Conservatori delle leggi*, Preservers of the laws, which was composed of ten citizens, whose duty it was to prevent the bartering of public offices, to see that the magistrates fulfilled their official duties, and to annul or correct whatever the latter should do, contrary to the laws. They had also criminal jurisdiction over certain classes of offenses; and were required to see that no one of the *Ammoniti* or Warned, or of those whose names were in the *Specchio*, or Register of unpaid taxes, should enter upon any office.[2]

Under the influence of Savonarola, the chief powers of the government were concentrated in a *Consiglio grande*, or Grand council, with from 800 to 1000 members. This was intended to include all the male citizens of thirty-nine years of age, and upwards, one of whose ancestors in the male line, within three generations, had occupied at least one of the three principal offices of the city. For the selection of ambassadors, commissioners, and for other duties, a *Consiglio di ottanta*, or Council of eighty, was also created, whose members were elective, and must be at least forty years of age.

---

[1] Villani, IV, 4, 175–6; Ammirato, 665–6; Capponi, I, 92 et seq.

[2] Capponi, II, 206; Ademollo, Maria dei Ricci, II, 639.

Mention has already been made of the intimate association between the business and politics of Florence. This is particularly true of the earlier period. When left to her own devices, at the close of the twelfth century, the first rulers of the city assumed the ancient title of consuls. In the year 1200, some of them adopted the name of *Consoli delle arti*, or Consuls of the guilds. At first there were but three; but after a two months' trial, the number was increased to six, and before long, it was twelve. Of the first three, one represented the parish or district of Oltrarno, and was elected by the guild of Calimala; the second represented the parish of San Piero Schiereggio and the bankers' guild; while the third was from the district of San Pancrazio and the wool guild. Their election was by secret ballot; and they held office then as later for two months. The liking of the Florentines for quick routine in office is hardly comprehensible to us; for it necessitated a constant agitation in public matters which would seem to preclude the possibility of steadiness in the administration of affairs of state. Constant changes of ministry in France, for example, are now frequently cited as exercising a deleterious influence upon her internal and foreign relations; while many people of intelligence among ourselves believe that the presidential term of four years is too short for the best interests of the country. What then would be thought if we changed our officers six times per annum, as did the Florentines? They wished to prevent the formation of a ruling class, and considered office-holding a necessary part of the education of the citizen. How completely they failed in the end they sought, is but too well known.

Two months after the first experiment with the consuls, six consuls were elected; the guilds of physicians and druggists, of silk merchants, and of furriers, electing the new ones;

and each consul represented one of the six political districts of the city.[1] Later there were twelve, under the name of priors or signors, two from each sixth of the city, and one from each of the seven major and of the five minor guilds. After the city was divided into quarters, there were two priors from each quarter; but how these eight were apportioned among the guilds, does not appear.

In those days, every man must be a member of a guild, or submit to being called a *Scioperato*, or Do-nothing; and as such he was excluded from all participation in the government. As the thirteenth century advanced, the power of the business world in the government constantly increased, until in 1282 the signoria was formally constituted as composed of the *Priori delle arti*. In the meantime the number of guilds taking part in the government had also increased, on account of the growing influence of the artisans. Toward the end of the fourteenth century, these last succeeded for a time in getting the entire control of the government. This was brought about by the uprising of the *Ciompi*. This word has been variously explained. Originally it seems to have been applied only to the woolcarders; but as these were poor and rough, and as twenty-five of the least important trades were subject to the wool guild, and doubtless included a large proportion of the roughest element of the city,[2] the word ciompi came to be applied to the proletariat generally. Their leader in 1378 was Michele di Lando who, says Machiavelli, "in courage, prudence, and generosity surpassed every other citizen of his time." Once in office, however, he opposed the violence of those who had elevated him out of their own ranks to the place of supreme power. Thus division was produced, and the old leaders gradually regained possession of the government. But the masses had felt their power, though they did not know how to employ it; and the consequence was that they were ready to place it in the hands of flattering demagogues who, under the pretence of acting for the good of the working man, were in reality seeking nothing else half so much as their own aggrandizement. This we believe was the element in Florentine life which made it possible for the Medici to acquire the power in the community, of practically dictating the laws, though not occupying any office of theoretical importance. Even Cosimo, called the father of his country, pretended to despise the ancient aristocracy of the city, and is quoted as saying on one occasion, that if the old families were annihilated, he could make as good ones with the cloths of San Martino;—in other words, that dress makes the gentleman.[1] Do we not recognize here a spirit kindred to that widespread in America to-day? With the increase of the Medicean influence, that of the guilds declined; and by the end of the fifteenth century, they were practically a cipher in the political affairs of the city.

---

[1] The guild of judges and notaries, though placed at the head of all the guilds, seems never to have taken part in the politics of [illegible] to have exercised any functions not judicial in their nature.

[2] More than 30,000 persons are said to have been conne[illegible] wool industry. (Capponi, I, 251.)

Some of the guilds, whose members were engaged in foreign trade, had consuls stationed in those cities where their trade was most extensive; and these consuls had jurisdiction over the Florentine employees of the guild in the city of their residence. This was also a custom of Venice and other Italian cities; and probably gave rise to the system of consuls of modern times; who now, however, represent their respective governments instead of single corporations, and have no extensive judicial powers, except in barbarous or half-civilized countries.

Out of the innumerable contentions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines there arose at the final triumph of the former the so-called Guelph party, *Parte Guelfa.* To this corporation was given one-third part of the property which was confiscated from the Ghibellines. It had a special officer for hunting up and accusing suspected Ghibellines, against whom the unjust laws admitted the evidence of public report; and the punishment was at the discretion of the priors. For a time the Guelph party was so powerful in the affairs of the city that it may almost be said to have exercised an imperium in imperio. They had their own captains, who were the mouth-piece and executor of the will of the party. They possessed at one period a veto power on the legislation of the city, similar to that exercised by the ancient Roman tribunes. In the records of the reform of 1282, we find the statement that those were admitted to power "who most loved the Guelph party and the Holy Church." An oath of fealty to the party was required of those becoming members, in which they swore, among other things, that for themselves, their sons, and their descendants in the male line forever, they would be Guelphs of the Guelph party, devoted and obedient to the Holy Mother Church, and to her leaders of the Guelph party; and that they would do all and everything for the conservation and aggrandizement of the status of the Guelph party. As their power increased, the pride of the party leaders waxed apace, and their insolence toward the remainder of the citizens became almost intolerable. They were feared more than the signoria; and the decisions of their court appear to have been more respected than those of any other body of men in the commonwealth. Ambassadors, coming from other states, brought letters of recommendation to them as well as to the signoria. Although special allegiance to the Church was included in the party programme, they did not propose to become its slaves; and a provision of the year 1364 forbids all recourse to the pope, "which might be intended to obtain a diminution or dispensation from the laws and ordinances of the Guelph party."

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 6.

The party was composed largely of the ancient nobility, who in this guise continued for a long period to be among the leaders of the city. But as the business element, led by the

Medici, the Strozzi, and others, gained the ascendency, the Guelph party gradually lost its controlling influence; and in the fifteenth century, we find that their by-laws were not reformed with the rest of the government, apparently because the party had ceased to be powerful enough to be dangerous to those who controlled the new régime. We are told however that the party was still much honored for its ancient virtue, and that it had great revenues to spend for its own glory.

Besides the rettori and councils, whose functions have been mentioned, there were a number of committees, some permanent, some elected for a specific occasion, which had more or less important duties to perform in the governing of Florence. The police power seems to have been entrusted to the *Otto della guardia*, or Eight of the guard, who had supervision of the internal peace and safety of the community. They had power to arrest, but not to punish; as they were compelled to give their prisoners into the custody of the rettore under whose jurisdiction the offender properly belonged. In times of war, or when war was imminent, a committee was elected to conduct the military operations. In the earlier period they were called the *Capitani della guerra*, or Captains of war, and were an indefinite number of citizens selected by the rettori, priors, and certain influential citizens, whose advice was asked. A portion of the men thus selected went with the troops to the theatre of war, with powers of general supervision of supplies, etc., while the others remained in the city to supervise the collection of funds for carrying on the war, see that supplies were forwarded, and the necessary troops raised. Later the whole power of conducting war was entrusted to a committee known as the *Dieci di balìa*, or *Ten of full power*, who were elective, and selected for their valor and experience. Most of the other standing committees were possessed of some judicial powers. There were still others for the supervision of the repairs of castles, forts, etc., belonging to the community, and for the construction and repair of the city bridges, walls, and other public works. The Florentines believed thoroughly in the division of political labor; and tried to give all their citizens an opportunity of exercising some function under the government, and accordingly had many more officials than appear necessary to us for the direction of the affairs of so small a community.

They were forced from time to time, by sad experience, to recognize the fact that their form of government was extremely defective; but instead of reforming it from the foundation, and seeking to discover some principle on which it could be well and permanently organized, they chose to erect a dictatorship for longer or shorter duration, to tide them over a period of difficulty. Furthermore, they had not the wisdom of the ancient Romans in this matter, who, when they did adopt the questionable expedient of choosing a dictator, gave the power into the hands of a single man for a limited period, and made him amenable for his acts, as soon as the time of his dictatorship expired. But the Florentines placed the whole power of their community into the hands of an unwieldy body of citizens, for an indefinite or long period of time, and made them irresponsible for their action during the time they held the dictatorship.

When the great bell of the Palazzo Vecchio rang for two hours, with a certain stroke, the citizens of the city knew that they were all called to meet in the public square for the transaction of important business. Sometimes the business could be finished without the delegation of extra powers, and consisted in the ratification or rejection of some proposition of the signoria or councils. At other times, however, it was recognized by the people themselves, or by their leaders, whether in or out of office, that a radical change must be brought about; and for this they made *Balìa*, as it was called, that is, they delegated full powers of action to a body of men selected for the purpose. On hearing the bell, it was incumbent on every citizen to hasten to his proper place in the quarter of his residence, and report himself for duty to the gonfaloniere of his company. With banners flying, and led by the sixteen captains, the citizen companies marched toward the great public square, often shouting *Viva il popolo e la libertà*, Live the people and liberty. Be it remarked in passing that the Florentines were and still are a demonstrative and noisy people. On the piazza itself, every company had its own place, where its standard was set up. According to law, the citizens at such times should carry no arms; but we find that the law was practically a dead letter from the first, and that arms were carried by the Florentines on almost all occasions. Sometimes one party would occupy the square first, and prevent the other from taking their places; they could thus pass any law they desired. Later in the history of the city, when the Medici had acquired a controlling influence, they would guard by their minions the approaches to the square, and either keep out or overawe their opponents by the display of force. On one occasion, it is reported that they first filled the square with about 4000 foot soldiers and 300 cavalry, and then congratulated themselves that the business of the city had been accomplished without disturbance, and the people quietly dispersed to their homes. Although the population of Florence was about 90,000, these assemblies, supposed to be of the whole people, consisted sometimes of only 300 or 400 men.[1] Accordingly it is easy to understand why peace might be preserved with a guard of 4000 foot and 300 cavalry to suppress the slightest murmur against the propositions of the Medicean adherents.

The body of citizens being assembled, the gonfaloniere di giustizia and the priors descended from their quarters in the palace and took seats on the *ringhiera* or broad platform at that time in front of the great building.[2] Order being called,

---

[1] The census of 1495 returned only 3,200 full citizens. (Symond's *Despots*, 131, note 1.)

[2] When the weather was unfavorable, or for any other reason, they might go to the Loggia de' Lanzi.

one of their number, or a prominent citizen chosen by them, would rise and make a speech, explaining the nature of the public business to be transacted; and if balìa were desired, would ask the people assembled for their consent. That even this number of intelligent citizens did not do any original thinking, but merely followed the beck of their leaders, is shown by the fact that they regularly acquiesced in the proposition of their popular speakers of the time being. The idea of making balìa having been adopted, it remained to propose the names of those to whom the supreme power was to be entrusted; or to make up the slate, as it would probably be expressed to-day. From the promptness with which this seems to have been accomplished, it is very probable that the slate was already prepared before the citizens were called together. As to the number of members of the balìa, it varied from a dozen to several score. Commencing with the use of a small number of members, the number was increased from time to time, for a period; but again decreased, as the Medicean influence became supreme; as it was much easier for them to influence and control a dozen or a score than a large number. Furthermore the duration of the office varied in the inverse ratio; for as the number of members grew less, the time of their holding office increased; so that long before that family possessed the supreme power in name and title, they did so through their minions, who during periods of five and ten years held the balìa, and performed the bidding of their untitled chief. In the great balìa of 1490, on whose action much of the future power of the Medici appeared to hang, Lorenzo de' Medici had himself named as one of the members, although there were only 17 in all. In the early history of the republic the balìa was a recognized means of bringing about needed reforms, and its adoption might well be compared to the occasional meeting of constitutional conventions a
us. But as the Medici grew in strength, the balìa grad
became the ordinary form of government, with powers
ingly limited to five or ten years' duration, as the case

be, but renewed before they had expired. "Thus Lorenzo solved the most difficult of political problems—that of using a close oligarchy for the maintenance of despotism in a free and jealous commonwealth."[1]

A Florentine historian of the first half of the fifteenth century defines justice as "nothing else than the humbler of pride and the exalter of the lowly; and that which gives every one his due."[2] A century later another of the city's celebrated historians remarked: "Our magistrates administered little justice and law, especially in criminal matters."[3] To this may be added the words which Machiavelli puts in the mouth of a labor agitator of 1379: "Small crimes are chastised, but great and serious ones rewarded."[4] Perhaps in no other direction was the Florentine life of the Renaissance so far from our ideal as in its judicial system; and the judgment of Guicciardini will be re-echoed by every American who is familiar with the state of the judicial system of that city. In marked contrast to the many cases of malfeasance in office which went unpunished, Villani reports a case where one of the anziani sent to his villa an old balustrade of the lions' enclosure, which he had found lying in the mud on the Piazza San Giovanni; for which act he was fined 1,000 lire as defrauder of the community.[5] Sacchetti tells us of a podestà whom Florence called from Padua, who "commenced by taking now a thief, now two, three or four murderers, and users of loaded dice, and others of the worst kind, to hang and send to the other world. . . . And in a short time he hung so many and beheaded so many and meted out punishment in every form; so that, at the conclusion of his office, he left our city so purified and so healthy that it remained in fine condition for considerable time."[6] What a contrast to our slow and often ineffectual method of dealing with the riotous and criminal classes! Landucci records in his Diary a large number of cases which show the Florentine methods of administering justice. Thus in 1498 a man who had fled from Siena was murdered in Mercato Nuovo. The murderer was taken, tried immediately, and hanged the following day in the same place where he had committed the murder. This, adds the writer, "was a beautiful instance of justice, and quick."[1] A year previous, when some of the leading citizens had entered into a conspiracy for the restoration of Piero de' Medici, they were tried by a council of more than 180 men, who remained in session from morning till midnight. They convicted five of the accused, "and made them die the same night."[2] At another time, on the occasion of the festival of San Giovanni, a Bolognese was found cutting the belts of some of the citizens and stealing; "and before an hour passed, without regard to the solemnity of so great a saint [*i. e.* saint's day], they hanged him at the windows of the Captain."[3] The power of the Medici is well illustrated by the case of the three men who were hanged in 1481, who, probably after torture, "confessed that they wanted to kill Lorenzo de' Medici."[4] As one of these was a Frescobaldi, after the Bardi perhaps the most aristocratic family of the city, this case illustrates one Medicean method of getting rid of its hereditary enemies.

---

[1] Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, 316.

[2] Cavalcanti, I, 503.

[3] Guicciardini, *Stor.*, 277.

[4] Hist., III, ch. 3.

[5] II, 152.

[6] Novella, 42.

The judicial power of the government was in the hands of so many persons that there seems to have been in reality nothing which could be dignified with the name of system. Villani gives a list of those having such power, at the head of which stand the podestà, the capitano del popolo, the executor of the ordinances of justice, and the captain of the guard.

These four had each the power to torture as well as to hold court. In addition, he names the Judge of law and appeals, the Judge of taxes, the Officer of the piazza and provisions, the Officer of the ornaments of the women, the Officer of commerce, the Officer of the wool guild, the Officer of the clergy, the Court of the bishop of Florence, the Court of the bishop of Fiesole, the Inquisitor of heretical depravity. Even these are not enough: for there are "other dignities and magnificences of our city," who evidently possessed similar powers.[1] He omits the signoria; but we know from other sources that it also possessed the rights of judicature and of torture; and in one case it so far departed from dignity and justice as to call a prominent citizen to the palace, receive him in a friendly manner, then have him murdered there by hired assassins; and after his death declare him a rebel and confiscate his property.[2] Though the law seems to have required six votes for condemnation in the signoria, or in the eight of the guard,[3] the above case makes it clear that the law could be disregarded with impunity.

---

[1] p. 181. [2] p. 156. [3] p. 55. [4] p. 38.

Neither the form of accusation nor the nature of the evidence necessary to convict seems to have been subject to any fixed rules. Common report was admitted against the Ghibellines, as we have already seen. Evidence wrung by torture from the accused himself, his friends or his enemies, was not only admitted but appears to have been preferred. Then too there was provision for the reception of secret and unauthenticated accusations, which may fairly be compared with the famous Lion's mouth of Venice. This was a box fixed to one of the columns of the cathedral, and there were similar ones in some of the other churches, for the reception of written accusations.

In front of each box was placed the name of the officer to whom the accusations would go. Any one wishing to do another an injury was at liberty to write an accusation of any nature against his enemy, and place it secretly in one of these boxes, either with or without evidence of the fact. In case of conviction of the offense, and the imposition of a fine, the accuser had the right to claim one-fourth of the fine. In order to get it, he might place with the accusation any countersign, by means of which he could identify himself to the authorities after the trial. Revenge was usual, by the first accused sending in a similar accusation against his supposed accuser.[1] Another box for the reception of secret accusations was placed in front of the house of the executor of the ordinances of justice.[2]

---

[1] VII, 204–205.

[2] Cavalcanti, II, 162.

[3] Landucci, note 2, p. 102.

That judicial torture was practiced in Florence is familiar to all readers through the well known fact of Savonarola's having been subjected to it; but that it was a common means both of punishment and of extracting evidence from unwilling witnesses, is probably not generally known. Such however is the fact, as brought home to us by the numerous works of Florentines themselves. The usual method of torture was by the rope; that is, the prisoner was tied up by a rope passed under his arms, then alternately raised and let fall, without permitting his feet to reach the ground.[3] This treatment, however, was mild in comparison to another form of torture which was practiced all too frequently in the same city. When the public ill-will was especially aroused against a malefactor, the condemned man was carried in a cart through the streets, and from time to time pieces of his flesh were torn off with hot pincers. Landucci relates a case where the fire for heating the pincers burning down, the executioner was ordered to stop at a baker's to renew it; and the boys of the town wanted to assassinate him if he did not "touch well."[4] One day "a certain hermit" entered the beautiful Medicean villa at Poggio a Cajano, who was probably a "crank," but against whom there is no other evidence of evil intention than the report of the servants of Lorenzo de' Medici, who said he wanted to kill their master. So he was sent to the Bargello, where he was "given a great deal of rope," evidently without eliciting any damaging evidence; after which he was subjected to the unprecedented torture of cutting off his feet, applying fire, placing the stumps of his legs in the stocks for a time, then forcing him to rise and walk on coarse salt, so that he died.[1] It scarcely appears credible that such a scene could go on under the very eyes of the man who wrote beautiful hymns, composed the gayest of songs, and gathered about him for intellectual enjoyment the gravest scholars and finest artists of his age. At the same time there was in vogue the less harmful but humiliating punishment of sending a criminal through the streets seated on an ass and wearing a fool's cap.

---

[1] Varchi, Lib. XI, p. 317–318.
[2] Capponi, I, 94.
[3] Perrens, *Florence*, II, 332, note 7.
[4] p. 219.

Prison life in Florence was not luxurious, as it has become among us; but the prisoners were made to feel otherwise than by the mere deprivation of liberty that they had incurred the serious displeasure of the state. In order to prevent their prisons from becoming overcrowded, the hangman was kept well occupied. Throwing the condemned out of a window with a rope about his neck, seems to have been a favorite method of execution; and the walls of the Palazzo Vecchio and of the Bargello have very frequently been the background of such ghastly adornment. Beheading was also of common occurrence; but was apparently considered of too much formality to suit this people, with their love of quick justice. Burning at the stake was of the rarest occurrence, as I have noticed but one other case than that of Savonarola and his companions. This was in 1327, when Checco d'Ascoli was burned for practicing the black art.[2] Drawing and quartering were also occasionally practiced on criminals; and in one case, we read of throwing them alive from the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio on to the stones below.[3] Even boys were banished, on one occasion at least, and that because of the deeds of the father;[4] and in another case a girl was beheaded for the murder of a child.[5]

---

[1] Landucci, 36–37.

[2] Villani, VI, 58.

[3] Landucci, 19.

[4] Ammirato, 665.

[5] Landucci, 4.

Deeply as we may regret the loss of Florentine liberty and the establishment of the Medicean tyranny, the condition of affairs thus brought about was not nearly so bad as though the lower orders had obtained control of the government; and in as much as the latter result was entirely within the bounds of possibility, in the general turmoil of the city, we may take consolation in the establishing of the lesser evil; as did the historian and statesman Guicciardini, who himself passed through the troublous times following the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, and suffered from the result. He tells us that "the populace erred more frequently and with more hurt to the public than did the Medici; for that which is done according to plan is accustomed to have weight and measure, while ignorance is blind, confused, and without limit and rule. For this reason the proverb says that it is often better to have to do with an evil or malignant man than with an ignorant one."[1] Maecenas, the great Roman patron of letters, and a man of Etruscan origin, suggested to Octavius the abolition of the Roman Republic; and a later Tuscan family, acting the part of Maecenas in their magnificent patronage of art and letters, abolished the constitution of the Florentine Republic, than which, says Hallam, "nothing else in the history of Italy after Frederic II. is so worthy of our attention."

Appendix.

As the balìe are in reality epochal monuments in the history of the city, it will be worth our while to take a glance at some of the main points in connection with them. In 1341, when the city was greatly burdened, owing to a double war with Lucca and Milan, balìa was conferred on twenty citizens, with full power to levy taxes in any manner which pleased them; and to make war, conclude peace, or negotiate treaties according to their own judgment, with the express proviso that they were to act *senza sindacato,* that is without amenability. However, the fickle populace, not satisfied with their conduct, did try afterwards to bring them to account, but without effect, as the sentence which was procured against them, appears to have been revoked. The following year it was thought necessary to have another balìa, "to reform the city, select officials, and to make laws and statutes." This was probably the result of the social disorganization which generally follows a period of war. In place of the podestà there were to be three officials of each of the classes grandi and popolani, with "summary jurisdiction over misdemeanors and plunderings," but without other office.

---

[1] Reggimento, 62.

Thirty years later there was a very exciting period, when two parliaments were held in the single year 1372. On this occasion nearly all the high officials of the state were called upon to take part in the new reform, to whom were added a number of prominent citizens, elected for the purpose, by the several guilds. But the masses broke away from the control of the men who should have been the preservers of peace; and plundered and burned numbers of houses, entered the prisons by force and freed those confined therein, and did not even spare the monasteries, where many people had carried their valuables, hoping that the sacredness of the place would save them from rude hands; but it did not, and in one of them alone the mob found and appropriated property valued at 100,000 gold florins,—an enormous amount in days when the dower of the daughter of one of the wealthiest citizens was only 4000 florins, and the entire fortune of the Medici, the richest family of the age, amounted to but a quarter of a million florins.

Six years later, 1378, there was a great upheaval in the little republic, and balìa was given to the "eight of the guard" and to some of the citizens especially elected by the guilds, "with as much power as the entire people of the city would have, to reform the city and create new priors, the twelve buonuomini, and gonfalonieri delle compagnie." This was at the time of the famous revolution of the *ciompi*. This balìa created three new guilds, which were composed of the poorest citizens; one to consist of the tailors, doublet-makers, shearmen [*cimatori*], and barbers; the second, of the wool-combers and dyers; and the third, of the proletariat. The new signoria was to be composed of three divisions, consisting of three members each from the major guilds, the minor guilds, and from the newly-created guilds; and each division was to have its own gonfaloniere di giustizia. This last provision does not seem to have been carried into effect; or if it was, it was but for the briefest period, as no more is heard of three such officers.

In 1382 three parliaments were held, and other changes made in the government; the minor guilds gained in importance in being placed at last on a level in representation with the major guilds in the various councils; two of the newly-created guilds were abolished, and their guild-houses officially despoiled. To this parliament the members of the wool guild came armed, evidently determined to enforce their opinions, with arms if necessary. They went further, and even brought paid troops with them; and when the minor guilds put in an appearance, also armed, they were driven off, "badly beaten and some dead." At another parliament, held in 1387, the disorder in the city was so great that even the priors appeared on the ringhiera with arms, and provided a body of specially hired armed men for their own protection, both foot and horse. As a result, new lists of citizens, eligible to office were made, and the number of minor guilds was materially reduced.

The closing decade of the fourteenth century witnessed three parliaments in one year, 1393, by which the power of the Guelph party was broken, as it was for the future forbidden to "warn or condemn" any one on the ground of his being a Ghibelline,—by which we see that the ancient feud, which had caused so much tumult and bloodshed, had finally spent itself. But the nature of the people remained about the same, and the feuds continued, changed but in name. Another curious fact comes to light at the same time, namely, that men of prominence were then commencing to enroll themselves as members of the minor guilds, with the object of becoming in them the chief, and so gaining control of the force thus organized ready at hand. The fourteenth century had produced this great alteration in the feelings of the citizens; that whereas it was at one time almost a disgrace for a gentleman to enter even a major guild, now the minor ones had assumed sufficient importance to attract men of high social standing, who were willing to enroll themselves among the comparatively poor and needy, not for the high calling of charity or religion, but for the sake of the power which their superior intelligence would enable them to gain over the ignorant with whom they were thus brought into contact. Have we not the like movement among us to-day, when we see men high in office making common cause with those who are almost outcasts of society, for the sake of political preferment? And will not the result be the same? We know that the craft and riches of the Medici finally brought them to the throne of Florence; are we sure that the craft and wealth of a line of railroad kings or millionaire shopkeepers will not in the end bring such a one to a throne in America?

During the fifteenth century the Medici were alternately expelled and called back by the action of those entrusted with the balìa, but their power continued to increase. From being a recourse in times of extreme doubt and difficulty, the balìa became the ordinary form of government, enabling those behind the visible source of power to exercise a tyranny in the name of liberty. One after another the old offices became obsolete and were abolished;—the majority, who might have saved the liberty of the commonwealth, being blinded to the reality of the movement they saw going on about them. A balìa of 1453 received power to levy extraordinary taxes according to their own will; and thus an instrument of boundless power was placed in the hands of Cosimo de' Medici, who used it without mercy.

III.

Public Life.

When we consider the number of offices in the little Florentine republic and the very limited period of their occupancy, a natural supposition would be that almost the entire body of citizens took part in the administration of the government. The fact, however, that the power of the state was almost always in the hands of a few families militates against the acceptance of any such postulate. Some of the influential families of the early history of the city, as the Bardi, the Uberti, the Donati, were either extinguished or so effectually suppressed that they cease to be conspicuous in the annals of later times; but others, as the Peruzzi, the Pazzi, the Albizzi, and the Strozzi, have continued through the centuries to occupy high places in the government of their native city; while the Medici, who came into prominence comparatively late, swept all before them in their struggle for pre-eminence, and rose to supreme power, have disappeared; and their name is execrated in the city of their triumphs and humiliations. The numbers of members of some of the old families who have held the highest offices during the republic, those of gonfaloniere and prior, furnish plain evidence of the practically constant participation of those families in the public affairs of the state. The Peruzzi, for example, furnished 54 priors and 9 gonfalonieri to the city; the Machiavelli, 54 priors and 12 gonfalonieri; the Soderini, 33 priors and 16 gonfalonieri; the Corsini, 56 priors and 13 gonfalonieri; and so the list might be greatly increased. Some of the oldest families, like the Donati, refused to enroll themselves among the guilds, and were accordingly debarred from holding these offices.

Examples like this are, however, very rare in the history of the Florentines, most of whom sought, rather than avoided, such notoriety as the occupancy of public office brings with it. It is true we find in the records names of obscure persons as office-holders, coupled with those of prominent families such as have just been mentioned; and this is perfectly natural, inasmuch as the names were generally drawn by lot. But there were ways of manipulating the *borse*, as the boxes containing the names were called, which the leaders well understood; and furthermore, when an obscure individual did happen to find his way into such high office, he was no doubt largely influenced by the prestige of his more powerful coadjutors, who were accustomed from old association and experience to manage weighty affairs. Even in cases where the dictatorship or *balià* was entrusted to a committee, we find in the committee men from the humbler walks of life associated with prominent citizens, doubtless for the sake of conciliating the minor guilds. But how much influence would probably be exercised by an oil dealer, a wood vender, a butcher, or a keeper of a second-hand shop, when brought into connection with a score or fifty men accustomed to direct not only large business transactions but also the delicate intricacies of foreign diplomacy, and the puzzling affairs of internal finance?

The famous work of Machiavelli, called The Prince, caused the author's name to be reviled for ages; but it is now generally conceded that he only put into literary form the political ideas which were the actual basis of the Italian governments of his day. Accordingly, we should not expect to find the life of Florentine officials a model of public virtue, if judged by the standard of our day. Even now, after four centuries of political education beyond that which was possible for the Florentines of the Renaissance to obtain, the majority are more apt to judge a public man by his success than by his honesty. Occasionally we have spasms of reform, when the guilty are brought to punishment; but as a rule there is no call for a rigid inspection of the acts of a successful politician. So it was in Florence. Lorenzo de' Medici, the idol of the people, could make a common fund of his private resources and of the public monies, without arousing public resentment or severe criticism; although some years previous, a gonfaloniere and an enemy of the Medici, had been brought to trial by his successor for comparatively small peculations. In a speech on the subject, his accuser is reported to have said as follows:— "As the captain is the guard of the host, and the steersman, of the ship, so we [the gonfaloniere] are the guard and safety of the Republic. This Donato, who has laid down the banner of justice, is known to all the people as having made contract with the funds of the Community, when the Community was debtor to the soldiers. I say that this contract was unjust and cruel, and that if no remedy be applied, the time may come when this will be a ground for the destruction of the Republic." At the conclusion of the harangue, "All cry with one voice that the cheat should be punished. For this reason, Donato is sent for; and the case being made known to him, he was placed in the hands of the Executor, by whom he was condemned to repay the monies, and until he should do so, to be confined in the hated Stinche."[1] Thus the Florentine magistrates, like the Spartan boys, who might steal without obloquy so long as they were not caught in the act, were not expected to have particular scruples against corruption in office, though an unfortunate individual might be the recipient of condign punishment at a time when the public conscience was unusually aroused. Not only were men bought when actually in office, but speculation was rife as to those whose names would be drawn on a certain date; and some who desired to hold the balance of power on particular occasions were known to approach those on whom the lot might fall, in order to secure them in advance. Even the prophesies of a blind man, who had foretold with a considerable degree of success the names of future priors and gonfalonieri, were utilized for this purpose. As no one was permitted to enter upon the discharge of the duties of an office if he were not free from debt to the state, and as it was a common practice to try to avoid the payment of taxes, the rich who wanted the influence of prospective office-holders, often paid the back taxes of such men, with the understanding that when the latter came into office the favor would be returned. Another method of making use of office for personal ends was by participating in the administration of the public funds, by which it was possible to make gains not only directly, but also by influencing the market of the state securities;—in manipulating which, some of the Florentines were very skillful, considering that it was then a new thing in the world's history. In 1445 Puccio was made gonfaloniere notwithstanding the fact that his peculations were generally known; the sums received by him from the public treasury having amounted in seven years to 54,000 florins. Instead of denying their dishonesty, the officials defended it, as we are told by a native historian, on the ground that the cost of maintaining their dignity as magistrates was damaging to their private fortunes. "But," adds the historian, "they want the honors, though they do not want to pay for them."[1] On the other hand, it would not be just to give the impression that all Florentine officials were corrupt. Extremes met then and there as well as now. Of Giannozzo Mannetti, who was in public office for a long period, we read that he was "one of the most learned men of his time. While the state employed him as diplomate, tax-receiver, and podestà (in Pescia, Pistoja, and Mugello), he fulfilled the duties of his office as though a high ideal had awakened in him, the common result of his humanistic studies and his religiousness. He collected the most hated taxes on which the state had determined, and accepted no pay for his trouble; as chief of a province, he refused all presents, abhorred every form of bribery, and demanded from his subalterns strict obedience and perfect disinterestedness. He looked after the importation of grain, restrained gambling, adjusted suits at law with untiring energy, and in general, did everything for the curbing of the passions through goodness."[1]

---

[1] The prison for debtors.

---

[1] Cavalcanti, I, 214.

One who had long and faithfully served the Florentine public as notary, and who had not grown rich or celebrated thereby, quotes a proverb in one of his letters, which shows that his experience was that of most of the world. He says: "He who endures fatigue for a community will not have served any one;" and his annotator adds as another Florentine proverb in the same connection, "Who serves the community serves no one."[2] Notwithstanding this fact, the Florentines eagerly sought office, and an old historian describes in pointed language their manner on first entering on the discharge of official duties. "The young novices," he says, "full of pride, and disputatiousness, putting on airs, with the chest puffed out, rolling their eyes and knitting their brows, they do not give any counsel, but discuss things which have no connection with the subject for which they were called."[3] But the men who began their public career with so much pride and affectation were often destined to meet with a most unpleasant interruption of it, if not with a tragical conclusion. For the Florentine public was fickle, swept by the whirlwind of passion; and could be extremely demonstrative in its disapproval of an action which offended it as it was in a show of devotion to any one who pleased it by flattery or amusement. Men whom they applauded to the echo on entering office, were more than once driven from the city a little later, with ignominy and insult; their houses were plundered and burned, and their families dispersed. The Medici, to whom unbounded homage was generally paid, were several times hounded from the city, and with difficulty saved their persons from injury. The Pazzi family was almost annihilated after the failure of the conspiracy which they headed; but the remnants of the family afterward rose again to distinction in the community. The Duke of Athens was hailed as a savior from civil discord, was invested with despotic powers, given enormous revenues, and finally driven forth in disgrace, loaded with the anathemas of the populace. Many other men of less distinction suffered likewise, their fortunes rising with the success of their party, their exile and often the confiscation of their property, following its defeat.

---

[1] Burckhardt, *Cultur der Renaissance*, I, 261.

[2] Mazzei, *Lettere*, II, 9.

[3] Cavalcanti, I, 68.

Among the striking features of the Florentine palaces are the handsome ornaments of bronze or wrought-iron which adorn the façades of many of them. These were called *fanali* or *lumiere*, and were not, as one would naturally suppose, ornaments that a man might place on his house according to his individual taste; but they were the visible testimony of public recognition of great deeds. On festive occasions these fanali were provided with pitch torches, whose crackling flames gave a merry aspect to the whole neighborhood. Amerigo Vespucci addressed the account of one of his voyages to the gonfaloniere Piero Soderini, with whom he had formerly been on intimate terms; and the latter procured a decree of the republic in accordance with which, fanali were sent to the family palace of the Vespucci and kept burning day and night for three days.[1] The most beautiful of all Florentine fanali, according to the general opinion, are those which adorn the corners of the famous Strozzi palace. They are of wrought-iron, and were made by a smith who enjoyed a local celebrity, not only on account of his masterly work, but also because he carried on his business on a strictly cash basis; nay, went further, and refused to work for any one who did not prepay in part at least for his order. Thus he received the nickname *Caparra*, or Earnestmoney.

---

[1] Capponi, III, 115.

Florence had also other methods of rewarding the noteworthy deeds of her sons. One of the most usual of these was the conferring on them the title of knight; for though in her best days she conferred no title of hereditary nobility, she did believe in the one of knight; and not only conferred it herself on occasion, but seemed to rejoice particularly when some great potentate, as the pope or the king of France, conferred it on one of her favorite children. On other occasions she would grant a present; as when, by a decree of the chief magistracy, she gave to the celebrated Cristoforo Landino, a villa near the city, in recognition of the value of his annotations on the writings of that greater Florentine, Dante.

But the favorite manner of official recognition of the debt of public gratitude was by giving a deceased citizen the honor of a public funeral. In the case of Donato Acciajuoli, for example, "a sumptuous funeral was decreed to his remains; Lorenzo de' Medici and three other eminent citizens were appointed curator of his children, who were declared to be exempt from the payment of taxes; and the daughters had considerable portions assigned them from the public treasury."[1] After the death of Rinaldo Gianfigliazzi, at the advanced age of 90 years, a man to whom many important offices had been entrusted in the course of his long, useful life, they not only gave him a public funeral, but showed especial confidence in the race by placing his son in office as his successor.[2] One of the Florentine ambassadors dying at Venice, in 1398, the home government gave him a public funeral, which was attended by the doge of Venice and a large part of the nobility.[3] For the funeral of Coluccio Salutato, who, after the death of Petrarch and Boccaccio, was regarded as the most learned man of his time, a great catafalque was erected on the piazza of the Signoria, the open coffin placed upon it; and "in the presence and amid the acclamations of the magistrates, the clergy, and the people, the gonfaloniere placed about the scholar's head a crown of laurel."[1] To Poggio Bracciolini, another of their famous scholars, they raised a statue; which, however, a later generation, forgetting his merit, took from its original place, and put on the façade of the cathedral as one of the twelve apostles.[2]

---

[1] Roscoe, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, 159–160.

[2] Ammirato, 698.

[3] Mazzei, 187–188.

Though the Florentines were generally economical in domestic affairs, they believed so thoroughly in the dignity of their state as a whole, and in the consequent dignity of office, that they expected from their office-holders a corresponding pomp. As citizens they were expected to be willing to use their own wealth for the proper representation of the public during their occupancy of office; and to those whom they called from abroad to perform official functions, they gave a sufficient salary with which to provide the necessary display. Thus, for example, during the fourteenth century, the three foreign officials, the podestà, the capitano del popolo, and the esecutore degli ordini di giustizia, brought with them a train of 200 followers,—judges and notaries, men-at-arms, and retainers.[3] Furthermore, office-holding frequently brought the rich and poor together in closer relations than existed in private life; for during the term of office as prior and gonfaloniere, they all lived together as one family, eating at the same table, meeting at any and all hours for the discussion of public affairs, and sitting together on the ringhiera, when the great bell called the public to meet in parliament. Even when the balìa was given to a committee, we find along with the representatives of aristocratic families, of the quarter of Santo Spirito, also a butcher, a second-hand clothes dealer, a potter, etc.; and the same holds true of the representation of other quarters. But the petty tradesman, after the two short months of his official splendor, fell back into the obscurity whence he had come;

---

[1] *Biog. Universale.*

[2] *Ib.*, art. Poggio.

[3] Capponi, quoting the Statuti, I, 189.

whereas the quondam prior of aristocratic family, his term of office ended, still remained in greater or less prominence, by reason of his social position; and if he possessed talent, was apt to be chosen to fill other posts of honor, especially that of ambassador.

The Italians are great talkers; and a part of the official training of the Florentines should have been speaking in public; for any one of them was apt to be chosen by lot to fill an important office in the state. But in the peculiar division of public labor which they adopted, men of especial preparation therefor generally made their speeches. This custom was carried so far that even the rich families employed their official orators.[1] The speeches made by these men were not of a quality adapted to our taste; but they must have been good according to the standard of the time. Otherwise the men who made them would not have been listened to with apparent pleasure, for hours at a time, even by the highest and busiest dignitaries; and they certainly would not have been honored as they were, by the bestowal of money, lands, and titles.

The signoria received the embassies of foreign states, on which occasions a good deal of speech-making took place. The court language was often Latin; and the man who could make an impromptu speech in that language was sure of public recognition, and at least a moderate degree of celebrity. Cavalcanti gives us a word-picture of the reception of an embassy, a part of which we here quote:—"Four ambassadors arrived at Florence, a bishop of the order of the Frati Minori, a knight, a jurist, and a noble citizen of Milan. They appeared before our signoria and the councillors; and the knight, rising in his place, made a solemn and masterly recital in the name of him who had sent the embassy. He declared that to the words of the venerable bishop full faith and credit should be given, as though spoken by their prince and lord, and that the bishop would prove this as much by letters as by word of mouth. The noble knight having resumed his seat, the said prelate rose in his place, and presented to the eminent signoria his letter of credence. Our priors then received it; and the chancellor having read it, they say to the venerable bishop that to whatever he sees fit to say, they will listen attentively. Then the prelate, with grave voice and great dignity, began to speak." Into the detail of his speech it is not necessary here to enter. After it was concluded, and the ambassadors had withdrawn, a meeting of the other important bodies of officials was called, together with a large number of prominent citizens who had no office for the time being; and the mission of the embassy was discussed, and the answer prepared.[1]

---

[1] Perrens, I, 247.

Perhaps the most desirable office in the gift of the Florentine government was that of ambassador to a foreign government. This was an office which even the highest was proud to receive, not excepting such men as would not stoop to enroll themselves among the guilds for the sake of taking part in the home government. The allowance of pay was good; the office gave the occupant an opportunity to travel under the most pleasant auspices, with the surety of a delightful reception, not only at the court to which he was accredited, but also at every friendly city which he entered.

A detailed description of an embassy from Florence to the king of France, which was headed by Giovanni de' Medici, has been brought to light and printed in the *Archivio Storico Italiano.* It was written at the time by the city chancellor, Giovanni Cecchi, who was one of the company. How many were in the company he does not say; but for the transport of themselves and baggage, they had 100 horses and mules, which, he says, "was thought to be a great thing." They left Florence October 27th, 1461, and travelled slowly. They were handsomely entertained at Bologna, and did not reach

---

[1] Cavalcanti, I, 11 et seq.

Milan until the 8th of November. Here they were magnificently entertained, and tarried several days. On the 23d of December, as they were approaching Tours, they met the French king, with his suite. His majesty was on a journey; and hearing of the approach of the embassy, had swerved somewhat from his direct route, in order to meet the Florentines. He receives all the gentlemen cordially, and treats the Medici almost as an equal. He assures the members of the embassy that everything is ready for their reception at Tours, and that he will see them on his return. On their nearer approach to the city, they are met by a body of city officials, with considerable ceremony, and escorted into the city. They were formally presented to the king on the 11th of January, who gives to the three principal members of the embassy sixty marks of silver, presented in six large cups, six small ones, and eleven bowls. Besides presents of money, the ambassadors were the recipients of titles to honorary positions at the French court; which titles were authenticated by diplomas. Piero de' Pazzi was knighted, and received the titles of chamberlain and counsellor to the king; Bonachorso (Pitti?) was made counsellor, and master of the horse; Donato Acciajuoli, counsellor, and master of the palace; while on the Medici was conferred the high titles of chancellor and secretary to the king. After all these ceremonies, the embassy took their leave of the court, and made their way to Paris by easy stages. Here they spent some time enjoying the sights, and returned home by a different route, reaching Florence on the 13th of March. During the whole time occupied in their passage through the estates of the dukes of Milan and Modena, they were "accompanied by an immense number of lords and gentlemen, with trumpeters and fifers, at their expense, being continually in great triumph." A detailed expense account of the journey was also kept, and has been published, from which we extract some curious facts. The largest number of items are for fees to musicians, servants, and priests who showed the relics in churches. From this account we learn also what musical instruments were at that time in vogue; for at Milan they had trumpeters and fifers, also a player (juggler?) and the court clown; at Modena they were entertained by flute players; at Reggio, by a harp player; at another place, not named, by two players on *zufoli*, or rustic flutes. For sending a letter from Milan to Florence they paid two *scudi* and eight *parpagliuole*, which amounted to about three dollars of our money. At that rate of postage it is no wonder that the people at large were not active correspondents. For charity, their contributions do not appear to have been large, although a bishop was one of their number. To the poor of Modena, they gave one gold florin, one-half as much as they gave the two flute players of the same place; while to the hospital of Paris they gave the diminutive sum of four *parpagliuole*, or about twelve cents. One entry records an outlay "for the love of God," of one *pichione*, a word which I have been unable to find, but strongly suspect it to be the same as a *picciolo*, which valued the fraction of one cent.

The career of the Medici family forms one of those remarkable cases where the wheel of fortune turned rapidly, alternately raising them to the supreme power in the state, and again making of them outcasts. Cosimo, the first great member of the family, filled in turn every office of importance in the gift of the republic, and added at the same time immensely to his inherited riches. But in 1433 his enemies, the Albizzi, secured the popular support, and succeeded in driving him and his family out of the city. He was arrested and confined in the public palace, where he almost starved himself, through fear that his enemies would put poison in his food. In regard to his liberation from that prison, accounts differ somewhat, as Cosimo, in his *Ricordi*, says that he escaped by bribing his keeper with a small sum, when the man might have had 10,000 ducats or more, to deliver his prisoner from danger; while Cavalcanti says that two of the Otto della Guardia were given him for a guard to the borders of the Florentine possessions; and that he had with him a large number of infantry.[1] It is true that he says also that the keeper led Cosimo, three hours after sunset, to his own house, where supper for him was prepared, after which he mounted a horse, and with many companions, left the city. Now it is scarcely possible that all this could have been done without the knowledge of the government, by the mere bribing of one under officer, as Cosimo represents it. True, the Albizzi and their followers were assembled in the piazza in front of the palazzo, and would doubtless have been glad of an opportunity to slay Cosimo in a hand to hand encounter; and that is very good reason for his having left somewhat secretly, though under public protection. A year later he returned, also secretly, in order to avoid the demonstrations of the crowd. By a strange coincidence of fate, at the same time when Cosimo was a prisoner in the palace, and about to be banished from the city, a certain Niccolò de' Medici, a distant relative of Cosimo, was drawn as gonfaloniere of a company. He was called to the palace, and warned to be content with the position which lot had conferred on him, and not try to rule the state as Cosimo had done. As he entered the palace, he found every one fully armed, "some talking, some shouting, others threatening, and some afraid; while in every direction there was heard the clank of arms, talk about the dead, and of the ruin of the citizens."[2]

Within a year of his banishment, Cosimo was called back by a vote of the fickle city; and returned in triumph, to rule the city from that time to his death in a more absolute manner than he had ever done before. As his wealth and power increased, he determined to build him a new house, and asked the celebrated Brunelleschi for designs. When submitted for approval they appeared to Cosimo too elaborate, as he justly feared arousing too much enmity among his fellow-citizens. So he called upon Michelozzi to draw plans for him, which were adopted; and those of Brunelleschi seem to have been destroyed. While the palace was in process of construction, there was much murmuring against it in the city; and one night the doorway was completely defiled with blood. However, Cosimo thought it prudent not to make too much stir in the matter, and no investigation took place to discover the offenders.[1]

---

[1] I, 542.

[2] Cavalcanti, I, 521.

Under his grandson Lorenzo, the family fortune and power increased amazingly; and with the exception of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, which not only failed in its design but in reality added greatly to the general devotion shown to the Medici, Lorenzo's period was a happy one for him and the commonwealth. He died just in time to escape the approaching storm; and on his son Piero fell its thunderbolts. Born and bred in the lap of luxury, Piero was destined to flee ignominiously from his home, have a price set on his head, and spend the remainder of his life in vain endeavors to reconquer the city. His brother Giovanni, who later became pope while still quite young, was compelled to flee the city in disguise, and found it prudent to shout Liberty! and throw money to the mob, in order to escape detection. Their magnificent palace was given a prey to the mob; even the signoria took part in its spoliation, and received as its share of the booty a wealth of rings, together with 3,000 medals of gold and silver, weighing forty pounds, and 20,000 ducats from the family coffers. Ballasat, the chief of the French then in Florence, also took what he could lay his hands on, under the pretext that the Medici bank in Lyons was his debtor to a large amount. The mob were allowed to break into the wine cellar, which they proceeded to empty of its valuable contents, and the wine "flowed in floods."[2]

One of the best known palaces of the world, and the one where hangs the famous Madonna della Sedia of Raphael, is that which still bears the name of Pitti, its proud and unfortunate founder. This Luca Pitti was the son of Bonaccorso

---

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 210–212.

[2] Perrens, II, 87–88.

Pitti, once ambassador to France, and a writer of local distinction. Luca entered public life at an early age, and occupied various positions of dignity under the republic, such as prior, gonfaloniere, ambassador to Rome, to Francesco Sforza in Milan, etc.; and was one of the most useful instruments in the hands of the great Cosimo. As gonfaloniere, he was principally instrumental in sending out ten ships to England, Barbary, and Constantinople, on a business venture, which proved so successful that the citizens of Florence made a net profit thereby of more than 100,000 florins. In their gratitude they showered presents on the originator of the scheme, so that he realized some 20,000 ducats from his brilliant idea. But he was also the author of new and burdensome taxes, which were imposed "without mercy." As Cosimo drew near his end, the power fell more and more into the hands of Luca Pitti, who became so proud, and possessed in reality so much power, that he "seemed to have become prince instead of Cosimo." On the death of the latter, he opposed the pretensions of Piero his son, and entered into a conspiracy to overthrow the Medicean power, hoping thereby himself to secure the chief place in the city. But suspecting his inability to accomplish his plan, he suddenly abandoned the conspiracy and attempted to gain the friendship of Piero by proposing an alliance between his own daughter and the young Lorenzo de' Medici. Piero shrewdly encouraged him in the belief that such an alliance would be agreeable, until he had gained the upper hand in the political moves of the day; then he suddenly turned against the former conspirator. Pitti had been knighted in the days of his power, by the people, and had commenced the construction of two magnificent residences, one in the city and the other in the country. But when Fortune turned her back on him, his descent from his lofty position was like a fall over a precipice into unseen depths below. Those who had loaded him with presents in the days of his power now demanded them back, alleging that they had been merely loans. Work was necessarily discontinued on the palace; and he retired into obscurity so dense, that history does not even record the date or circumstances of his death. Thus ended the life of the man who has been declared by Guicciardini to have been, after the death of Cosimo, absolutely the first citizen of Florence.

The careers of many other Florentines might be cited as examples of the fickleness of fortune in that city,—of men who did not rise so high or fall so low as did Luca Pitti, but who knew all the delights of the possession of power and all the bitterness of exile and want. While apparently enjoying the smiles of fortune, they were kept in an almost constant state of unrest, in their fear of losing the favor of the people; and when in disgrace and exile, they occupied their time and devoted what means they could command to conspiring against those in power in order that they themselves might return. The case of Dante is particularly well known; how he was exiled while on a mission as ambassador of the city to Rome; how he never again saw Florence, although intensely desiring it, and struggling for it, but not willing to return to it under disgraceful conditions, such as were once offered him; and how he finally expired at Ravenna, his great life work completed, which has made his name famous for all time; and how he was buried far from the graves of his ancestors. Almost a century later, the city government recognized the great injustice which had been perpetrated, and restored him "to his family honors, with the same formalities as if he had been still living; his descendents were permitted to enjoy the possessions of their illustrious ancestor, and his bust, crowned with laurels, was raised at the public expense."[1]

Still more strange is the history of Savonarola. Not a Florentine either by birth or by early association, he seems never to have become a citizen of the exclusive little republic, though he rose to be its dictator, without however occupying any office. For a time he swayed the people according to his will, by the power of his magnetic eloquence; he admonished the king of France, and defied the pope; raised the lowly, and humbled the proud; he made himself almost a god in the eyes of the Florentines, and finally so far lost their regard, that he was with difficulty saved from being torn to pieces by the exasperated mob. Tried and condemned by his fellow-townsmen, he calmly met a martyr's death in flame; and his ashes were carried by the waters of the golden Arno to mingle with the all-engulfing sea.

---

[1] Roscoe, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, 241.

The public life of a community consists not only in the life of its public men, but also in the public life of its citizens at large; for by public life we mean not only the careers of those who take a prominent part in the work of the government, but also that life which is common to the whole community; and we mean further, not only such acts as are connected with the use of the franchise, but also all in which the general public may take part if they desire it. Thus in the Florence of the Renaissance, every citizen was expected to be present once in two months, at the installation of the new signoria, on which occasion the new gonfaloniere di giustizia received the standard of the community, the new priors took the oath of office, the gonfalonieri delle compagnie were entrusted with the standards of their respective divisions; there were speeches and music, marching and countermarching; and the day ended in general festivity.

When the great bell of the public palace stormed the signal for a parliament, the companies again came to their respective places on the great square; and instead of the peaceful scene of pageantry and pomp, they but too often saw excited men bearing arms and heard harangues of abuse and invective, and of incitement to crime. When a speaker who was not popular arose to address them, the crowds were accustomed to shout and talk back and to shuffle their feet so as to create such confusion as to make it impossible for the orator to proceed with his discourse. Not infrequently the demagogues succeeded in attracting the crowd to their way of thinking; and a disastrous movement was thereby inaugurated which brought great evil on the commonwealth, and the masses saw when it was too late how they had been duped. Sometimes respect for the signoria would bring them to quiet if not to reason; at others, even their authority was set at naught, and the populace did not hesitate to insult and abuse the highest officer of the state. Thus in the heated times of 1498 it was considered necessary by the gonfaloniere Vespucci to close the meeting on account of the disorder; then the mob followed him to his residence, raised a gallows at his door, mocked him on account of his baldness; and then made a tour of the city, armed with all sorts of weapons, "striking, wounding, and killing."[1] On another occasion, angered at the imposition of new taxes, they proceeded to mob the house of the offender; they destroyed what they could lay their hands on, and succeeded in finding 40,000 florins concealed under his fireplace. The attack on the monastery of San Marco, when the feeling turned against Savonarola, is another good illustration of the spirit of this strangely fickle community.

The internal feuds which for so long a period continued to make of the city a scene of almost constant riot, will not easily be forgotten. On some old palaces are still to be seen the heavy rings of iron in the walls, to which were attached strong chains as the mainstay of the barricades which were frequently erected as means of defense against an internal enemy. However, the towers from which inimical neighbors were attacked have long since disappeared, much of their material having been employed in the construction of the city walls. The walls in turn have given place for the most part to the peaceful avenue, which now marks their old site. From these towers great quantities of stone were hurled at the enemy; and it is surprising to what an extent this primitive weapon was employed, even in the later history of the community. A stock of them was kept in the public palace itself, and even the priors on occasion did not disdain to use them. When King Charles VIII. of France was in the city, and a conflict arose between his troops and the citizens, the former were completely defeated and compelled to retire from the city; and this, notwithstanding the fact that the citizens seem to have used no other weapons than stones. During the attack on Savonarola, he and his followers retreated to San Marco, accompanied by a crowd of boys armed with stones. Arrived at the monastery, Fra Benedetto ascended to the roof, and at once began throwing the stones of the walls down on the mob below.

---

[1] Perrens, II, 354.

Long after the great family feuds had come to an end, for want of material to feed the fire of discord, street brawls continued to disturb the stillness of the night, if they did not interrupt the business of the day. Benvenuto Cellini relates how he, aged sixteen, and his brother, two years younger, walking one Sunday toward sunset between the city gates of San Gallo and Pinti, met a youth of about twenty, with whom the brother fell to fighting with his sword. The friends of the stranger, seeing him getting worsted, began to throw stones with slings, one of which struck the younger Cellini and felled him, senseless, to the earth. Benvenuto sprang to his rescue, picked up his sword, and defended both until they reached the gate of San Gallo, where some soldiers came to his rescue and enabled him to reach home with his brother "as one dead." All the parties to the disgraceful affair were banished by the authorities, "the adversaries, for years" the Cellini brothers for six months.[1] Another artist, Lippo, was stabbed in the breast at his own door, one night, on account of some heated words he had spoken to a hotspur that morning; and died of the wounds a few days after.[2] Worse even than this is the story according to which some of the young aristocrats of the city, including a Strozzi and a Vespucci, while on their way to a wedding one evening, found time to stop and kill in cold blood a poor chicken vender. This they did, says the chronicler, "wishing to show that they were not less brave than proud." ![1]

---

[1] Vita, chap. II.

[2] Vasari, *Opere*, I, 268.

For pessimists who are always decrying their own age and country, is it not a good thing to look occasionally into the past, and by a study of all sides of that life, gain a just basis of comparison with the present? Would any one with a full knowledge of such circumstances maintain that all the conditions of life were then more desirable than those of our own century and country? We would not disparage the advantages of life in Florence during the Renaissance; for it was undoubtedly worthy the encomiums which have been pronounced upon it; but it is in comparison with the other cities of its own day that it stood so immeasurably high, as a delightful place of residence, not in comparison with the great cities of the world to-day. Life must be considered as a whole, and not as a mere fragment; as exemplified in the conditions of all ranks of society, not in the condition of the few favored ones; nay more, it must be judged from its moral and economical side, as well as from its intellectual and artistic productions.

If then we compare the public life of Florence during the Renaissance with our own of to-day, I believe that the comparison, on the whole, will not show to our disadvantage. Even in our worst communities crime of the more violent sort is not so common as it was in Florence; and certainly, men who move in our best society would not dream of engaging in such deeds of violence as were not infrequent in the best circles of Florence. If our business men are less learned and philosophic than were those of Florence, they are also more orderly. If our artists are less gifted, it is probably because the best talent of the country has been turned into other channels; for the inventive genius of the Americans fully equals, if it does not surpass, anything of the sort which the world has ever seen. We have great strikes to be sure, which probably involve much greater pecuniary losses than they ever did in Florence; but they do not cost a revolution of the government, or the banishment of a portion of the citizens. Though we do not have so large a proportion of so-called palaces in our great cities, the great majority of our people enjoy a degree of comfort which was unknown even to the wealthy of those days.

---

[1] Cavalcanti, II, 204.

If our public life as a whole is more to be desired than was that of Florence, and so much seems clear to us, that should not content us, though it may be a legitimate ground of self-congratulation. It is only the narrow mind which is satisfied with the consciousness of superiority over somebody else. A higher satisfaction, if not real happiness, comes from a consciousness of progress toward a high ideal. From the Florence of the Renaissance we can learn the folly, or at least inadequacy, of trying to educate the people to self-government by giving them an opportunity of taking part in the actual work of the government. It is far better to educate them properly as to what to demand of good public servants, and to see that the public servants are capable of performing the services expected of them. American demagogues defend the spoils system of our government by decrying the bureaucracy of other countries; but it is perfectly safe to assert that none of the people of the great constitutional powers of Europe are under greater bondage to their bureaucratic officials than we are to our politicians. We are free in the theory of the law, and slaves to our politicians in practice; the Europeans have more duties to perform toward their respective governments, but at the same time are generally more sure of enjoying such rights as are given them by the theory of the law.

From Florence we can also learn by an object lesson the value of placing men of learning and address in offices of dignity and trust; for it was largely by this means that the diminutive republic succeeded in gaining the respect and admiration of the civilized contemporary world, and in exerc an influence therein out of all proportion to her size. above all, we should take to heart the lesson afforded by downfall, for which the corrupt use of money was principally, if not altogether, responsible. We also are a commercial nation, and riches are increasing to an extent unknown by Florence, even in her best days; and the love of money and the power it brings with it appear to be growing equally if not more rapidly. Unless another and higher ideal is instilled into the future generations of Americans, the day seems not far distant when this great republic will also be a plutocracy, from which another step may bring it into a tyranny.

IV.

PRIVATE LIFE.

The one feature of Florentine private life which above all others is worthy our attention, was the great simplicity in the manner of every day home life, even among the rich.[1] For this was instrumental not only in producing strength of body and vigor of mind, but also in affording leisure time for intellectual occupation, which otherwise would have been wasted on the thousand and one superfluities of luxurious life. A Florentine professor told the writer that he had somewhere read the statement that even in the palace of the Medici, the ordinary hospitality consisted in the offer of wine and—chestnuts! At the table of the great Lorenzo, we read that there was no recognition of rank in the order of seating, but that each took his place according to the time of arrival, whether he was a grandee of the city government or the poor student of sculpture, Michael Angelo. The story of Brunelleschi's crucifix affords a good illustration of the simplicity of life among the artists of the age. Donatello having carved a crucifix which his friend Brunelleschi criticised rather severely, the critic was challenged to make a better one, and determined to do so. He worked at it in secret, and when finished, proposed one evening to Donatello, that they eat supper together in his (Brunelleschi's) studio. They bought the eggs and other simple provisions for their supper, which Donatello placed in his apron, and together they walked to the studio, Donatello not dreaming of the surprise which awaited him there. Brunelleschi let his friend enter first, whose eyes immediately caught sight of the wonderful carving; and in his utter astonishment, he let fall the contents of his apron, and spoiled the supper. He acknowledged the superiority of Brunelleschi's work, and prayed to the crucifix,—which was later placed in the church of Santa Maria Novella, where it still remains. Another anecdote, which Vasari relates, of the painter Buffalmacco, illustrates in a pointed manner, not only the simplicity of family life but also the simplicity of mind among the working classes. The said Buffalmacco, who worked much at night and retired late, and so wished to sleep correspondingly late in the morning, was much annoyed by the wife of his next door neighbor, who rose about the time he went to bed, and commenced plying a weaving machine which stood against the wall, on the other side of which the artist's bed was placed, and thus effectually spoiled his rest. Seeking some method of revenge, he discovered a hole in his wall which let him see the kitchen fire of his disagreeable neighbor. Watching for her back to be turned while preparing meals, he succeeded, by the use of a long, hollow reed, in salting her dishes so as to make them inedible. At first her husband bore it in patience, but from day to day waxed more furious, until it came to blows. One day the wife's screams brought out the neighborhood. Buffalmacco innocently mingled in the throng, approached in calmness the injured husband, and suggested that the wife got so little rest during the night, on account of her constant working at the weaving machine, that she lost her head during the day. So if she should stop the night work, she would probably not make such mistakes in the cooking during the day. The weaver seemed to think this good logic, and submitted the proposition to those about him, who all agreed. Hence he commanded his wife to cease her night's labors,—and so long as she did so, the food was not too much salted.

---

[1] Accordingly we cannot see the justness of a remark of Symonds, made however in regard to the Italian Renaissance in general, which affirms that "the one quality which every one despised was simplicity, however this might be combined with lofty genius and noble aims." (Despots, 254.) The remark is certainly not true in regard to Florence.

Although the Florentines of the Renaissance could justly congratulate themselves on the commodiousness and even luxury of their houses, in comparison with those of other nations at the same time, they were not very comfortable according to our standard. They were large and roomy, but they were not provided with corridors which enabled one to reach the various rooms without passing through others. On the contrary, the whole house was arranged in suites of rooms, which plan might be more effective for appearances than our modern arrangement, in a house of the same size, but which precluded the obtaining of privacy except in very few rooms. But privacy seems even to-day to be a matter of less consideration among the Italians, with their bright, naïve natures, than to the colder, more calculating natures of the wintry north. The Florentine's house was, however, no less his castle than was the Englishman's; for it was not at all unusual for private citizens to keep armed retainers in their houses, ready for a fray, whether looking to a change in the government or for the revenge of some private wrong. This is probably one reason why many of the private houses were so large. Otherwise it seems more than superfluous to have so much room as we find in many of those old residences. Still there was another and a good reason for having large houses, and that was the existence of an almost patriarchal system of family life; as it seems to have been usual for the married sons to bring home their wives to dwell under the paternal roof, and rear their children as part of the general family.

Varchi, in describing Florence in 1529, speaks in glowing terms of the elegance of his native city and of the life there. As to the houses he says they all have terraces, loggie (which may be described as open galleries), stables, courts, antechambers, and at least one, if not two, wells of healthy, cool water; which condition of affairs he characterizes as having "all the ornaments and all the advantages which houses can have."[1] Regarding the money prices of these houses, it is almost impossible for us to form an idea. We read of a house being bought for 118 florins, which must have been a very fair kind of a house, judging by the parties to the contract, for one of them was a Tornabuoni. In another case there is record of a house, which was apparently several stories high, and situated in the middle of the city, which cost but 30 florins, or say 90 dollars! Another house in the same street rented for 18 lire, or $4.50 per annum! What the cost of the great palaces was I have never seen stated. Moving day seems to have been the first of November; but the contracts for rent were generally entered into six months previous.

The basis of the family was naturally the marriage tie; but in Italy generally, and not less so in Florence, this bond was considered in a light which would cause a shudder of horror to pass through the frames of our American women. No divorce was of course permitted, and the marriages do not seem to have been any more unhappy than those we see about us to-day. But if the men and women of our American cities should give so little heed generally to the sacredness of the marriage tie as did the Italians of the Renaissance, murders and crimes of all kinds would probably be much more frequent than at present. Strange to say, this condition of life does not seem in the least to have degenerated the race, physically or mentally, as we are so often told that such a condition of life would do.[2] A natural result of this manner of treating the marriage tie was, as Commines remarked at the time, that but little difference was made in the treatment of legitimate and illegitimate children.[3] If, however, we may judge of the life in general from the few concrete examples we have preserved to us, the relations between husband and wife, and especially between parents and children, were not unhappy, but the reverse. Leon Battista Alberti's description of life at the

---

[1] II, 114.

[2] Burckhardt, II, 210–211. See also II, 139.

[3] Perrens, II, 27.

Villa Pandolfini shows the existence of warm affection between husband and wife, parents and children. Some of the letters of the Medici do the same. And a letter of the notary Lapo Mazzei, after the death of his oldest son, gives a beautiful picture of fatherly affection. "God knows," he writes to his friend, "how much hope the oldest was to me, whom I had already made a companion for myself, and with me, a father of the others; and how rapidly he had advanced in Ardingo's bank, where he held his place, in favor with the many who had their eyes upon him. And God knows how, for many years, he had never failed morning or evening to say his prayers, kneeling in his room, so that many times I pitied him, on account of the heat or cold. God, who sees him, knows also what he did on his death-bed; what words of gentleness he spoke, and how he told us he was going to judgment, and was prepared to obey the summons."[1] Does not such a letter tend strongly to mollify our general judgment of the city and its inhabitants? A nearer acquaintance with the Italian of to-day shows that much of the worst of his character is on the surface, and that he accordingly often makes a bad first impression on those of northern climes, who are accustomed to conceal their weaknesses, not to speak of worse characteristics. The religious art of the Renaissance, the writings, and what the age accomplished, should teach us that there was beneath the surface, which was too often frivolous and shocking, much that was earnest and noble, which commands our homage and respect.

Another picture of modest, hard-working family life, illustrates the general condition of the upper middle classes of the day. Married in 1376, Ser Lapo had, in 24 years, 14 children; and then others, as he naïvely adds. "The boys I sent to school to have them learn arithmetic and corre [illegible] ng; then I placed them in trade. Servants, I had none [illegible] not healthy, sewed the trousers for the boys, and h [illegible] sent from Prato, for economy. To her I confessed that it [life] was sometimes bitter; but from conjugal affection I knew the spring of purest happiness; and I call mothers the mast of the ship."[1]

---

[1] *Lettere*, I, 247–248.

The position of women in the community seems to have differed materially from time to time. In the very earliest period they are said to have been of the simplest habits, when they were "much more soft and delicate than the men;" when "the greatest ornament of the most noble and wealthy woman of Florence was no other than a tight skirt of bright scarlet, without other cincture than a belt of antique style, and a mantle lined with black and white."[2] However the simplicity in woman's dress does not seem to have been of long duration; for as early as 1323 the city authorities were making strong ordinances against the excessive ornaments of the women.[3] Three years later the Duke of Milan complains against the women of Florence that they have led his wife to adopt a displeasing and vulgar great knot of yellow and white silk, which was worn "in front of the face" instead of curls of hair, which head-dress had been already forbidden by the Florentine authorities; but, adds the historian, "thus did the excessive appetite of the women defeat the reason and sense of the men."[4] The women however still held their own way, and in 1330 their conduct reached a point at which the city fathers determined it should no longer be tolerated. We let the old chronicler tell his own story: "The women of Florence were greatly at fault in the matter of superfluous ornaments, of crowns and garlands of gold and silver, and pearls, and of precious stones, nets and certain wreaths of pearls and other ornaments for the head, and of great cost. Likewise they had dresses cut of several kinds of cloth and silk, with silk puffs of various kinds, and with fringes of pearls, and little buttons of gold and silver, often of four or six rows together. They wore also various strings of pearls and of precious stones at the breast, with various emblems and letters. In the same manner they gave extravagant entertainments and wedding parties, expensive, and with superfluous and excessive table." So the city fathers passed an ordinance forbidding the women to wear crowns of any sort, even of paper, painted; combination dresses, and dresses with figures either painted or embroidered, were also forbidden; although woven figures were permitted. All stripes and bias patterns too were condemned, except simple ones of not more than two colors; and more than two rings on a finger were not to be tolerated.[1] The experience of Florence in such matters is but a duplicate of the experience of other countries, namely, that sumptuary laws fail of their end, while making indignant those against whom they are aimed. Similar laws were even later enacted in Florence; but the habit gradually fell into desuetude, and the women were left to their own devices. To judge from the portraits of the few women of Florence which we have seen, they were not overly extravagant in dress during the fifteenth century; though they certainly were odd in their display of taste, as nearly all styles of other days appear singular to us. Thus in the portrait of Caterina Sforza, the wife of Giovanni de' Medici, she appears in a dress of plain black, with the neck cut square and surrounded by a narrow band of white. The sleeves are plain at the wrist, and puffed at the top and slashed with white. She wears a close-fitting head-dress of black, lined with white, a portion of which falls on to the shoulders. It is kept in place by a narrow black band passing over the front of it, and beneath the hair at the back of the neck. She wears but one ring, and that is a broad one on the marriage finger. These stringent laws of the fourteenth century found favor in other cities of Italy, which sent deputations to Florence asking for a copy of them. The Florentine women however refused to be subdued, and managed to find cloths more extravagant in design than ever, and sent for such even to Flanders and Brabant, "regardless of cost."[1]

---

[1] I, lxxiii–lxxiv.

[2] Ammirato, 78.

[3] Villani, V, 229.

[4] *Ibid.*, VI, 21.

---

[1] Villani, VI, 212–213.

Burckhardt makes the statement that in the Italy of the Renaissance woman was equally respected with man, and that her education in the highest classes was essentially the same as that of the men.[2] Whether or not this was true of Italy in general, we shall not discuss; but that it was true of Florence, we do not believe. It would be pleasant to think so, and believe that the Renaissance was so far ahead of the after world in this respect; but we do not find that the facts, at least in regard to Florence, justify such a general conclusion. There were, it is true, individual cases, where women stood very high in culture and in the public regard; but that such a condition was at all general, even among the highest classes, as Burckhardt states, is open to doubt. In one respect at least woman seems to have been put on the same plane as man, but that is one where we would not wish to see her, namely, that she was not shielded from the nastiness and vulgarity of the other sex. Her presence does not seem to have restrained the men from indulging in the most ribald conversation; and the songs of carnival time, than some of which it would be difficult to find any writing more filthy, were especially addressed to the ladies. It is no doubt true that Alessandra Scala, Vittoria Colonna, and some others could be not only highly gifted, and enjoy the respect as well as the friendship of the most gifted men of their age; and that Lucretia Tornabuoni, who married one of the Medici, may have written fine poetry at an age when that art was in its decline; but these sporadic cases do not prove a general proposition as to the standing or culture of the women of the day in general, any more than it would prove that the women of England of Mary Somerville's day were generally cultured and respected because she, and a few others, were. In the case of England, we know the contrary to have been true; in Florence, the truth was very probably on the same side. Certainly the words of Lorenzo de' Medici, who was in a position to judge, point to such a conclusion. In describing a beautiful and talented woman, he says: "Her understanding was superior to her sex, but without the appearance of arrogance or presumption; and she avoided an error too common among women, who when they think themselves sensible, become for the most part insupportable."[1] Now if the women were respected as the men, according to the opinion of Burckhardt, how does it come that a man like Lorenzo de' Medici, who was certainly one of the most cultured and broad-minded men of that age, speaks of a talented woman being "superior to her sex?" Does anybody ever write that a brilliant man is superior to his sex? The relations of Lorenzo to his own wife point to the same conclusion, if we may judge from a letter she wrote him complaining of the conduct toward her, of Poliziano, the tutor of their children. In the first place she addresses her husband as "*Magnifice Conjux*," which appears to us much more a sign of humble respect than of intimate affection. Yet she was a born Orsini, and as such, of older and more aristocratic family than her husband. She goes on to say that she was very much opposed to Poliziano's remaining in their house, at her displeasure. But she continues: "Know, I should say to you, that if you desire him to remain, I shall be very content, although I have endured his uttering to me a thousand villainies. If this is with your permission, I am patient, but I cannot believe such a thing." Is this the manner in which a woman, who stands on a level with her husband, not only socially but in the eyes of the public, would address her consort? Would the American woman of to-day suffer such insolence at the hands of a house tutor of her children, even though that tutor were a scholar of celebrity? And what did Lorenzo do in the case? He did not discharge Poliziano in disgrace, but took his children from their mother's supervision and sent them off to another villa, placing them entirely in charge of the man who had insulted his wife; and for the future, treated him with fully as much respect and confidence, if not with more endearment, than before. This remarkable letter closes with the expression "I recommend myself always to you,"[1] an expression which a person seeking office or a favor might adopt, but certainly not a phrase of endearment. Boccaccio wrote, it is true, a work entitled *Of Celebrated Women* (De claris mulieribus); but as one of his characters is the reputed woman-pope Johanna, and as he is particularly fulsome in his praise of the then reigning queen Johanna of Naples, with her murderous instincts and four husbands, he does not seem to place woman on a very high plane. Furthermore, in a later work, *Of the Fortunes of Illustrious Men* (De casibus virorum illustrium), he distinctly states of the women: "Since but few good ones are to be found among them, they are altogether to be avoided."[2] Does all this tend to show that woman stood on a level with man in those days of high art, and wonderful intellectual intercourse?

---

[1] *Ibid.*, 215.

[2] II, 134.

---

[1] Quoted in Roscoe, 102.

From another point of view, that of the legal standing, woman in Florence was not regarded in the same light as man. The story of Dante's banishment is well known, and also the fact that his wife remained in Florence without molestation, and was enabled to save enough of the family property to live and to educate their sons. Still more striking is the case of the exile of Carlo Strozzi, during whose absence occurred the nuptials of his daughter Maddalena with Luchino Visconti; on which occasion the wedding festivities included even horse races and tournaments; although at that time the city was under the rule of the proletariat or ciompi.[3] If woman had been considered in all respects the equal of man, is it probable that she would have been permitted to hold such public festivities in a city from which her father was banished in disgrace, for having opposed the new political movement? We do not find that the adult sons and brothers of exiles were treated with such lenity. With the increase of the Medicean power, there seems to have been a change for the worse in the treatment of women, if we may judge from a case of the banishment of a poor crazy woman from Florence on the return of Cosimo, in 1434. At this, Cavalcanti, the historian, grows furious, and decries the whole Florentine people for banishing "a poor public crazy woman, without the slightest intellect."[1] In 1436, when there was war between Florence, Milan, and Venice, the wife of Francesco Gianfigliazzi went from Siena to Bologna, disguised as a pilgrim, in order to nurse a sick son. On her return, she entered Florence for the night, and was recognized. Although a woman, and one who had committed no crime, she was imprisoned, and even tortured, evidently with the hope of gaining some information of the enemy. And after the torture, although nothing had been elicited from her which either made herself suspicious as a spy, or helped against the enemy, she was returned to the prison, and placed among the criminal women of ill-fame.[2] This period, following the return of Cosimo, was one of unusual severity in Florence; and the sentiment in favor of treating women leniently seems later to have returned to its old channel. For instance, after the flight of Piero de' Medici from Florence, in 1494, his mother and wife remained in the city without being molested, usage tolerating them, notwithstanding the decree of banishment published against the chief of the family. Three years later, at the time of a conspiracy to restore Piero to power in the city, his sister was proven to have taken part with the male conspirators, though without the knowledge of her husband; and instead of being dragged to a loathsome prison, as had been done with less regard to justice under the rule of her great-grandfather in 1434, she was quietly guarded in the house of Guglielmo de' Pazzi, and not further molested. A little later she was set at liberty by the influence of Francesco Valori, to whom it seemed brutal to touch a woman. Even in the case where a man was legally declared a rebel, which was equivalent to the old English idea of outlawry, it was considered beyond the power of a gonfaloniere to imprison the man who married the outlaw's daughter; although there existed a law which might be interpreted as authorizing under such circumstances the imposing of a fine of four thousand florins on the offender. As late as 1508 another case is spoken of, according to which it was against a statute to banish a woman; or at least women were exempt in the case where their husbands were liable; and this seems to have extended even to cases where the husband was declared a rebel.[1] With such examples before us, is it possible to believe that women were looked upon in the same light as men? that they were equally respected? that they were considered as of equal importance, even when it was proven that they had taken part in a conspiracy? So far as we are able to interpret human actions, all the evidence appears to point to exactly the opposite conclusion. To us it seems that women were loved, and in extreme cases sheltered from the ruder treatment to which the men were subjected; but that they did not stand on the high plane on which they stand to-day among us, either as regards freedom of action or as commanding respectful consideration, especially in what pertains to the vulgarities of life. Though some few women acquired learning of the nature of that enjoyed by the most cultured men of the day, we have seen no evidence to prove that the mass of them were educated in the same degree as the male population.

---

[1] Roscoe, 461.

[2] Cited from Geiger, *Renaissance and Humanismus*, p. 68.

[3] Capponi, II, 53, note.

---

[1] p. 604.

[2] Cavalcanti, II, 108.

The librarian of the Laurenziana Library remarked one day to me, that the most difficult problem in Florentine history was to get an adequate idea of the home life of the period. This appears to me to be especially true in regard to the domestic economy. Here and there a mere hint is let drop on some point, in regard to which we would like to be better informed; but nowhere have I been able to find anything like an adequate description of the manner of conducting a household of the Renaissance. That the Florentine women were thrifty housewifes, we know; that there were not only servants, but in some cases, even slaves, is made evident to us, by such documents as the will of one Luca, son of Sera, by which the slave Caterina, who had been purchased in Aragona, is given her liberty.[1] Yet there was evidently so little slavery as to have no effect on the labor market. As to the wages of house-servants in general, little seems to be known; but that such servants, on occasion, could command good wages, even in those days of the high purchasing power of gold, is shown by such a circumstance as that which is on record in reference to a wedding entertainment in the year 1407, where the cook who prepared the table received the sum of four florins and 10 soldi.[2] When it is recalled that a house of fair size rented for 18 lire per annum, and that a city residence could be bought for less than 200 florins, it will be seen that this was very high pay for cooking the viands of one entertainment. Another anecdote of about the same time illustrates the fact that servants even then were more or less the tyrants of the household; for our friend Mazzei invites his correspondent to supper, and says that his coming will make no disturbance in the household, as "in order not to trouble the house-servants, I have sent to the bakery [to be roasted?] a fat pullet and a loin of mutton."[3]

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 380.

Burckhardt remarks that "the Renaissance first attempted consciously to make of the household a well regulated matter, nay, to make of it a work of art."[4] One of the principal ways in which this was shown was in the bridal outfit, of which the house linen formed a very important part; as the Florentine women were particularly proud of the display they could make in this particular. What they thought of dress has already been shown. That the men also gave considerable attention to this latter subject seems very probable; for on the occasion of grand civic displays, the reception of public guests, and great processions, the men appeared in magnificent costumes, made of gold and silver brocades, of velvets and fine silks, etc. Sacchetti, a famous novelist who died early in the fifteenth century, complains of his contemporaries not being content with many colors on the back only, but they must even have each stocking "divided and crossed with three and four colors."[1] Plain colors, however, seem to have been much esteemed, as shown by the portraits of the Medici and others still preserved; and in the sixteenth century, Varchi mentions black as the usual color of men's clothes.[2] Laws indeed were also made, attempting to restrain the men as well as the women in their extravagance for personal adornment.

---

[1] Mazzei, II, 118–119, n. 3.

[2] Mazzei, I, xlvi, n. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 12.

[4] II, 140.

Another important element of their housekeeping was the securing and storing of quantities of wine and oil for future consumption. Even to this day it is customary for the Florentine housewives to buy the olive oil for a whole year's consumption, when the new oil comes in, and place it in the store-room in one or more of the large earthern jars, such as the forty thieves of the Arabian tales were concealed in. Here in America olive oil is said to degenerate rapidly in quality from the moment when it is exposed to the air; while in Florence it remains good for a year in the great jar, called *orcio*, which is never closed air-tight, and is opened from day to day according to the needs of the family.

In a country where Bacchus has been worshiped for ages, it is not surprising to find that great care is bestowed on the selection and housing of a proper store of wine. Even now, after all things have greatly increased in dearness, even the peasant farmers in the mountains bring to the door, when a gentleman does them the honor of stopping, some wine, which the visitor is expected to drink to the health of the donor. How much more so in those old days of frank hospitality and cheapness of wine. The juice of the grape then cost but a trifle, when we read of a man buying a store of twenty barrels, which was sufficient for two years' consumption, for fifteen florins.[1] Within two years, the writer has seen wine offered in the city for seven cents a litre; and this too, where it pays a heavy octroi; how much cheaper must it then be in the country? One of their favorite dishes consisted of bread soaked in wine. This was apparently their original *zuppa* or soup;[2] and not the liquid made of meat broth, as is the present custom. The use of the word in almost the original signification is found to-day in *zuppa-inglese,* or English soup, which consists of sweet cake bathed in wine sauce.

---

[1] *Novella*, 50.

[2] II, 123–124.

Varchi mentions among the noteworthy virtues of his fellow-citizens of the early part of the sixteenth century, the fact that they kept house with "incredible neatness and cleanliness,"[3] a virtue that was especially to be prized in days when ideas of such matters were generally of great crudity, and when the artistic and hygienic qualities of soap and water were not appreciated. Mr. W. W. Story, who has written so delightfully on various Italian and artistic matters, would not probably agree with the writer on this point; for he somewhere makes the remark, in reference to the old dirt of Rome and complaining of the new so-called improvements, that other people called it dirt, but he named it color. Be this as it may, our Florentines of the Renaissance cannot be accused of having been unartistic; and so it is all the more to their credit, if they succeeded in combining with their remarkable artistic gifts, the then unusual virtue of cleanliness. To cleanliness they added its sister virtue, that of orderliness in the affairs of domestic economy; for they have the credit of first having introduced the idea of book-keeping into their household matters; and the housewives are supposed to have been in this respect model helpmates to their husbands.

---

[1] Mazzei, I, 325.

[2] Mazzei, II, 143, n. 3.

[3] II, 122.

Although the Florentines lived well and comfortably in the city, they seem to have taken still greater pleasure in their country residences; and on these they spent so much, that their contemporaries are said to have regarded them as insane in this particular.[1] Within a radius of twenty miles of the city there are reported to have been twenty thousand estates belonging to Florentine citizens, with eight hundred palaces, whose walls were built of cut stone; the average cost of which palaces was considerably more than 3,500 gold florins.[2] The life in these villas varied with the wealth and taste of their occupants; and we have preserved to us hints here and there which give an insight into their manner of life. The pious notary, whom we have so often quoted, says he loved the villa, though he had but a few fields, and what might be termed an orchard, and a few rooms where his old mother lived, whither he often went on horseback, to attend to some matter of the harvest or vintage. He gave especial attention to the wine, taking care of the vineyard with his own hand. He liked also to have some good vinegar in the house. Here he ate coarse food, and paid little attention to the appearance of his dress.[3] He enjoyed his olives and his capers, his preserves made with wine; and here he kept early hours, taking his supper an hour or two before sundown. One of his contemporaries was a certain Guido, who had a villa near the hill of Fiesole. "This man," says Pitti, "was one of the greatest and most esteemed men of Florence; and in his villa he collected with pleasure his friends; without the merriment of company, without the noise of the chase, they found solace in Boethius and St. Jerome; they studied the Gospels, and they wrote poetry."[4]

---

[1] Burckhardt, II, 187.

[2] Varchi, II, 116.

[3] I, lxxviii.

[4] Mazzei, *Lettere*, I, lxiv–lxv.

Near the ancient town of Fiesole, the gifted Pico della Mirandola provided himself a modest retreat from the strife and turmoil of the world; and near him was the learned Poliziano, who found the proximity of his friend most agreeable. A letter of Poliziano to another celebrated scholar, Ficino, gives such a charming picture of the simplicity of life among these wise men, that a quotation of some length needs no excuse:—"Wandering beyond the limits of his own plantation, Pico sometimes steals unexpectedly on my retirement, and draws me from my shade to partake of his supper. What kind of supper that is you well know; sparing indeed, but neat, and rendered grateful by the charms of his conversation. Be you, however, my guest. Your supper here shall be as good, and your wine perhaps better; for in the quality of my wine I shall contend for superiority even with Pico himself."[1]

Naturally, the Medici, with their enormous wealth, and their love of ease and luxury, indulged their taste in the matter of country residences; and possessed a number of villas in the environs of the city. Among these was one known by the name Poggio a Cajano, which was of simple construction, but commodious, and surrounded by a fine park. That the age was still more or less warlike is shown by the fact that, although built after the middle of the fifteenth century, this villa was surrounded by high walls, which were provided with four towers; and there was a deep moat. The stables were very extensive, and were floored in stone for the sake of cleanliness. Here Lorenzo made a specialty of breeding milk cows, and commenced the manufacture of cheese with such success that it was said he might provide the whole city and surrounding country with it, for which they had been compelled to send before to Lombardy. The whey was fed to the hogs, which attained on this diet an unusual size. From Sicily he imported pheasants and peacocks, and stocked the park with them. His garden and orchard were immense, and he planted so many mulberry trees that a correspondent of the time thought the price of silk would thereby be reduced.[1] Not far from this villa is another one, named Carreggi, built by Cosimo, which still preserves paintings of sixteenth century artists, and the recollections of those who have here lived, entertained, and died; for here passed away both Cosimo and his grandson Lorenzo; and here occurred the famous interview between the latter and Savonarola. Here, too, the Platonic Academy sometimes held its sessions, and here the ancient philosopher was crowned and venerated as never even in his native country, during his brilliant career.

---

[1] Roscoe, 282.

The most complete and delightful picture of the country life of the Florentines, however, comes to us in connection with the life of that true, old aristocrat, Agnolo Pandolfini, who could not brook the upstart Medici, and retired from public life when Cosimo came back in triumph in 1434. His villa at Signa must have been a model of the time for comfort and hospitality. Within eight miles of the city, he was there far enough distant to avoid the unpleasantness of mingling in public affairs, but was not too far away to be easily reached by his friends to whom he wished to extend the hospitality of the place. Having lost his wife while still young, his old age was here made comfortable by the presence of two loving daughters-in-law, who did the honors of the house for him; for he remained the head of the house, notwithstanding the fact that his two sons and their wives were also its inmates. Here he spent his time, busied with literary occupations, and enjoying the company of his learned guests, whom he delighted to gather about him; he heard also many masses, and offices of the church, for he was very pious. He had stables well stocked with riding horses, and went to the hunt with a company of fifteen or twenty guests, all of whom he seems to have mounted from his own stables. Falcons he possessed in numbers, as hawking was one of the principal sports of the age; and, as hare and deer were plenty, hunting of large game was not neglected; and fishing also seems to have attracted him considerably. When his sons returned from the city on Sundays and holidays without bringing company with them, he reproved them; and on week days, he would send out to persons passing the villa about meal time, and have them invited to dine with him. Water to wash their hands was offered them on entering, and they were then seated at table, no questions being asked as to their business or social position. After dinner, he would thank them for the pleasure of their company; and not desiring to detain them longer, would take a courteous leave of them. This gentleman of the old school lived to be eighty-five years of age, retaining apparently his wonderful vigor to the last. He was grave in manner, and without the least affectation. His fortune was great, as he paid the third or fourth greatest tax bill in the city; and one of the acts of political robbery, by which the money invested in the city funds known as the *monte*, was appropriated to public use, cost him 80,000 florins, which of itself was a large fortune in those days. Among the guests who enjoyed the far-famed hospitality of this villa was Pope Eugene IV.[1]

---

[1] Letter of Verini, quoted in Roscoe, 279.

Three ceremonies in life are considered of especial importance in all Christian countries, namely, baptism, marriage, and burial. The Italians of the Renaissance, like good people in other places, carried their children as soon as convenient after birth to the baptistery, and had them christened at the public font. But in one respect they inaugurated a new idea; for in their enthusiasm for the antique, many of them ceased naming their children for the saints of the Church, and gave them classical names. Or if they did not go so far, they translated the names into Latin or Greek, as taste dictated, or at least gave a classical form to them.[2]

---

[1] Vespasiano, *Vita d'Agnolo Pandolfini*, 49–51.

[2] Burckhardt, I, 291–292.

The most joyful occasion of life is the marriage feast, and right royally did the Florentines celebrate it. Young girls were excluded from the society of the Renaissance, even when not educated in nunneries; so that the marriage festivities were with many the first occasion on which they really mingled with men. Engagements for young children were not uncommonly entered into by the parents of the respective families, examples of which are found in such agreements of the Soderini and Medici families, and of the different branches of the Strozzi family, as well as of others.[1] It was a universal custom, as it still continues to be in Europe, to give a dowry with the daughter. The amount of course differed with the standing and fortune of the family; but in the first half of the fifteenth century, the average dowry of a girl of good family was 1000 florins; as we may gather from that sum being made a unit of dowry in 1424, when the *Monte delle doti* was established. Those who wished to endow their daughters more highly could have one and one-half dowries, or 1500 florins. The system was proposed for the sake of gaining a loan for the government, and was rather complicated, so that we shall not enter into the details.[2] In the last will and testament of Neri Capponi, one of the foremost men of his day, we read that he left for each granddaughter 1000 florins as a dowry, showing that that amount was considered sufficient for one even of their rank.[3] An anecdote of 1433 relates that one of a company of several young Florentines offered another a bonus of 800 florins, if he would enable him to marry one of the Alberti daughters, who was reported to have a dowry of 2000 florins.[4] As the Medici rose in wealth and position the dowry of their women was naturally increased; and it is related of the cardinal Giovanni, who afterwards became Pope Leo X., that he offered to endow his niece with 5000 or 6000 florins; but although "all the marriageable youths would have married her with pleasure, on account of the quality of the dowry," says a contemporary, "still there was not a single one who burned to take her, fearing it might be made a political matter."[1]

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 96, 313.

[2] See Varchi, Lib. xiii, p. 37 et seq.

[3] Cavalcanti, II, 437.

[4] *Ibid.*, 99, 400.

As we have seen in the case of one of the Strozzi, who married during her father's banishment, the festivities connected with the marriage were of the most elaborate sort. Probably the most magnificent celebration of the kind which took place in Florence during the existence of the republic was the one in connection with the marriage of Lorenzo de' Medici with Clerice Orsini. On her arrival in the city, she lodged at the house of Bernardo degli Allessandri, although the marriage ceremony had been performed in Naples. The festivities commenced on a Sunday, and continued until noon Tuesday, during which time practically the whole city was feasted by the Medici. Presents in immense quantities came in, not only from personal friends but from towns and villages which were subject to Florence; among them 800 calves and 2000 pairs of chickens. Feasting, dancing, and music continued day and night, until one wonders at the endurance of the people. Some idea of the extravagance of the entertainment may be gathered from such facts as that there were consumed of sweetmeats alone 5000 pounds; and that in the house of Carlo de' Medici, who undertook the entertainment of the townspeople, there were 100 kegs of wine consumed daily.[2]

Of the ceremonies of public burials, with their processions, and their speeches, there exist several descriptions; but of the manner of private burials, I have found practically nothing. However, as the company of Misericordia, which still exists, was founded in the early days, we may gather some idea of funerals of those days from the ancient customs which that company still perpetuates. A painting representing a burial, and believed to be of the sixteenth century, is still preserved in the building of the company, and shows the use of torches, masks, and dominos, just as they are seen on the streets of

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 372–373.

[2] Reumont, I, 276 et seq.

Florence to-day. Most of the funerals occur at nightfall; the religious ceremonies are the same as elsewhere in Roman Catholic countries; the coffin is carried on the shoulders of men who wear long dominos, and black masks, who may be gentlemen of the highest social rank, even when the poor are buried; for this company numbers among its members men of all classes, who offer their services free, for the love of humanity. Women as a rule take no part in the public solemnities of burial; and the men very often go afoot, following in this humble manner the remains of the honored dead. In a letter of 1478, a canon of a country church near Florence writes to Lorenzo de' Medici, asking for help to rebuild his church, which had been burned under the following circumstances. A medical quack had been practicing in the village, and had succeeded in killing, or at least in letting die, six sons in one family, which had been stricken with the pest; the doctor then took the dread disease himself, and died. His body was brought to the church, and left to take care of itself, with a lighted candle at the head, while the janitor went out to find or make a grave. Returning he saw the church in flames; and the structure, with the body of the accursed quack, was consumed to ashes.[1]

The luxury of the wedding festivities of Lorenzo de' Medici was in striking contrast to the simplicity of the old times described by Ammirato, when "the Florentines lived in great sobriety, not only in food, which was simple, and the made dishes coarse, but also in dress and in customs, and in all their affairs."[2] We see at present in America, how luxury increases with the wealth of the country; so it was in Florence; as the people grew rich from manufactures and foreign trade and exchange, they naturally wished to display the result in magnificence about them. Some there were naturally who made this display in vulgar show; while others, with a love of something higher, expended their fortunes in books and sculptures and pictures, as did Niccolò Niccoli, who is said to have had the finest works of his time; or Poggio, who surrounded himself with antique busts, only one of which was in a state of perfect preservation, but all of which were such as might please a good artist.[1] Of Vespasiano, we are told that he surrounded himself with remains of the antique, using even on his table ancient dishes and crystal goblets.[2]

---

[1] *Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, III, 67.

[2] p. 78.

Among such a people hospitality would of course play an important part in life, as to them social intercourse becomes a necessity. Their means of locomotion were not as convenient as ours; as we should find if we were compelled to go to the finest receptions on horseback, which seems to have been the usual method with them. Sacchetti gives us in his 51st Novella a picture of the arrival at a reception of the day, which is probably typical, and as such may be of use in representing to us the manners of the time. "He started towards the house of the said Messer Bonaccorso, and seeing in the street in front of his house, that the knights and other valient gentlemen were gathering according to custom, he hastened his steps, caught up to them, and joined them. And standing thus, when the entire company was come, and it was said to them to pass up, Ser Ciolo went up stairs with them. At the head of the stairs each one takes off his mantle. . . . And he goes to the basin and takes water for his hands, while the others are exchanging greetings." Methods of entertainment were probably as various with them as with us, and the table appears then as now to have been the centre of care and attraction. In the days when the authorities were trying to enforce simplicity they made an ordinance forbidding at ordinary companies the serving of more than three dishes, and at weddings, of more than twenty.[3] They had also music, dancing, and games of various kinds, with which to while away the time; so that the morning could dawn and find them still together in hilarity. Thus Varchi tells us of the beginning of a quarrel, when, at a ball which had lasted all night, Louisa Strozzi was escorted to her horse in the morning by a certain gentleman, who afterward spoke slightingly of her.[1] Burckhardt says that riding in vehicles was, during the Renaissance, becoming common on the well-paved streets of Italy, while elsewhere such a pleasure was practically impossible.[2] Though Florence was supposed to have as well paved streets as any other city of the age, if it did not surpass them all in that particular, I have been unable to find that driving there was customary. Mazzei mentions the use of wagons;[3] but I have not found any case of people using carriages, either for travelling or for pleasure; while riding on horseback is constantly referred to as the ordinary means of locomotion, even for ladies, as we have just seen in the case of Louisa Strozzi. If driving had been common, it seems to us that for ladies going to balls, it would certainly have been adopted; or if not for them, then for sick, rich men, such as Piero de' Medici, who suffered with the gout; but who, instead of driving, was carried in a chair from his villa to the city, as we are informed by his biographer.[4]

---

[1] Roscoe, 309–310.
[2] Burckhardt, I, 259.
[3] Villani, VI, 214.

As to the etiquette of the Florentines, I have found but little detail. That they were free and easy in their intercourse, has already been shown by a number of examples. In meeting on the street, the men raised their hats only to the gonfaloniere di giustizia, to a bishop, or a cardinal; and to the magistrates, to knights, doctors, and canons, they touched the front of the hat, or elevated it a little with two fingers.[5] Styles however seem to have changed then as now; for I have seen somewhere the statement that the men of other trades or professions raised their hats in token of respect to the doctors of laws. Varchi complains that the men have of late years, that is, in the early part of the sixteenth century, adopted the miserable fashion of wearing beards. Perhaps it was at the same period that the formality of salutation was diminished, and that thereafter, the hat was raised only to those of the highest ranks.

---

[1] III, Lib. xiv, p. 66.
[2] II, 117.
[3] I, 73.
[4] Roscoe, 85.
[5] Varchi, II, 126.

Looking at the private life of the Florentines as a whole, we find it a picture of great simplicity, as compared with the standard among us at the end of the nineteenth century. Though their houses were large, they did not enjoy anything like such a degree of comfort as can be had nowadays by people of even moderate means. Intercourse between the sexes, at least where married ladies were concerned, was free, and less refined than at present. The Italians are credited with having invented the art of polite conversation, and anticipated the French *salon* after an original and urbane fashion of their own."[1] If this was true of the Italians as a whole, it was pre-eminently the case with Florence, where learned conversation was cultivated as a fine art. Marriages which would have been intolerable according to our standard, do not appear to have been particularly unhappy; and there seems to have existed a great deal of real family affection. Women, however, were expected to attend to domestic duties, and to leave other matters of life principally to the men, although there are not wanting brilliant exceptions to the rule. The beauty of the life in general was largely in the long summers in the country, where they enjoyed intellectual intercourse, together with pure air, and invigorating exercise. Above all, the Florentine was of a bright and lively temperament, and could enjoy to the utmost the pleasures of social intercourse, whether living in the lap of luxury, or in the most simple manner; and it seems to us, that it is largely to this fact of constant social intercourse, that so much of the keen, natural intelligence of the Italian race in general, and of the Florentines in particular, is to be attributed.

---

[1] Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, 34.

U OF M

V.

Education and Intellectual Life.

The Florentines of the Renaissance have been credited with possessing "intellectual versatility and acuteness unrivalled in modern times."[1] The cause of their wonderful endowments has never been ascertained; but the elements thereof and the results achieved are open to investigation; and the subject is a most instructive one in teaching the possibilities of the human mind.

We are so accustomed to speak of the darkness of the Middle Ages, that we instinctively feel that the people of those days were far beneath our contemporaries in brain power. That such is the truth, however, does not seem probable; but they applied their mental force in other directions. Symonds is probably correct when he remarks: "Mediæval thought was both acute and strenuous in its own region of activity. What it lacked was material outside the speculative sphere to feed upon. Culture, in our sense of the word, did not exist, and the intellect was forced to deal subtly with a very limited class of conceptions."[2] Another characteristic of the Middle Ages, which distinguishes them sharply from our more practical age, was the "perpetual opposition of theory and practice."[3] During this period, when Christian Europe was wandering in the mazes of theological speculation, the products of Roman and Greek intellectual life were not altogether lost in the

---

[1] Symonds, *Despots*, p. 187.

[2] *Revival of Learning*, 58.

[3] Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 133.

Eastern Empire; and it might be interesting to conjecture what would have been the intellectual condition of western Europe, if the Greek church had not separated from the Latin, under Pope Leo IX., in the year 1054. Still earlier another great religious movement had been inaugurated in the Orient, which was destined to exercise great influence on the condition of Christian Europe. The followers of Mahomet may have despised learning in all its forms, in the early days of the propaganda; but they were soon infected with a zeal for knowledge which compares favorably with that of the Renaissance itself. The Moslem conquest of all Europe might possibly have rendered the whole continent barbarous, as has been often asserted; but the conquest of Spain was not by any means an unmixed evil. The architectural monuments, together with the agricultural and intellectual cultivation which the Moslem produced in that country, have never since been equalled there. To the east, south, and west, the Moslems encompassed the Christians of Europe, and afforded them a school of instruction in almost all matters pertaining to life. And it was among them that the torch of science and literature was kept burning brightly, while it was almost extinguished in the Occident.

The long peninsula of Italy, with its great ease of communication in all directions where the enemy, the teacher, was to be found, and with whom profitable trade might be carried on, naturally received the first intellectual impulse from the contact; and accordingly preceded the rest of Christian Europe in the acquisition of all that makes our modern life more comfortable and delightful than that of earlier days. "If," says Taine, "you compare Italy, in the fifteenth century, with the other nations of Europe, you will find her much more learned, much richer, much more polished, and much more capable of adorning herself, that is, of enjoying and producing works of art."[1]

---

[1] *Philosophie de l'art en Italie*, 27.

The necessary precedent of national, if not of individual culture, is an accumulation of material resources. This basis of her future culture Italy early acquired, largely from her trade, as buyer and seller; and also as carrier between north and south, east and west, sending her ships in all directions, and thus constituting herself a kind of world mart, to which all nations paid tribute. This same intercourse made Italians conscious of the fact that there existed in the world something higher than mere riches and the articles of luxury which riches may buy. Whatever may be said against mere intellectuality, it is after all the product of intellectuality which the world admires, and which preserves the name of its author from oblivion, as the years roll by. In this regard at least we feel disposed to accept the truth of the old adage, *vox popoli, vox dei.* To be sure, the highest ideal is the combination of moral purity with intellectual greatness; but the history of the world shows that many moral shortcomings will be overlooked, if not entirely pardoned, to him who has created some great product of intellectuality. Hence we cannot help admiring Athens and Florence, with all their moral failings, on account of the beautiful creations of their great men. The material wealth once accumulated, the Florentines proceeded to the acquirement of that which, though coming after, always eventually stands higher. From the contest at arms, in which they were mostly unsuccessful, as against the rest of Europe, they advanced to the play of intellect, in which they not only conquered their former conquerors, but became the instructors of all Christendom.

It was principally among the Moslems that the Italians first made acquaintance with the pagan writers of Greece and Rome, and thus found that "material outside the speculative sphere," which was needed as a basis of future intellectual progress. Before Lorenzo de' Medici commenced forming the splendid collection of manuscripts with which his name is connected, other Florentines had in like manner shown their fondness, not only for learning, but also for the means of learning.

Manuscripts were brought from different quarters of the globe, and here copied, many of them for personal use, by scholars who did the work for the love of it; others found in such work remunerative occupation, and made a business of it. As early as the year 1400, there was to be found on the Cathedral Square a vender of Latin and Greek manuscripts. However the number of known works was still small, and men burned to find other writings from which they might increase their knowledge of the ancients. It was discovered, almost by accident, that there were precious documents in some of the monasteries, of which the inmates had no knowledge or appreciation; and the searching out of manuscripts from hidden corners of Europe and Asia became a passion. Some scholars, as Niccolò Niccoli, consumed both their time and treasures in the work; while others, of more means and less leisure, paid the expenses of the searchers, or bought the manuscripts from those who made a business of collecting them. Thus Lorenzo de' Medici, not only commissioned his business agents to buy valuable manuscripts when and wherever offered for sale, but he sent the celebrated Giovanni Lascari twice to the Orient for the express purpose of discovering and purchasing ancient manuscripts. On his second voyage Lascari bought two hundred Greek works, eighty of which were not up to that time known to the Italians.[1] The exertions of Poggio Bracciolini, another famous scholar of the time, brought to light manuscripts, through which the entire writings of Quintilian and Plautus, some of the orations of Cicero, and the treatises of the grammarians Caprus, Eutichius, and Probus were first made known to the learned of the modern world.[2]

---

[1] Prezziner, *Pubblico Studio*, I, 168.

Lorenzo is credited with spending annually for books thirty thousand ducats, or about seventy-five thousand dollars in weight of gold; but allowing for the difference in the purchasing power of gold, his yearly expenditure equalled from $300,000 to $375,000—for books alone! (Perrens, I, 556–557.)

[2] Roscoe, 61; *Biografia universale*, Art. Poggio.

As manuscripts were exceedingly costly, and printing had but just entered on its marvellous career, the number of those who desired to read and study far surpassed those who could afford to buy for their own use, the necessary means of study. So the need of public libraries was felt, which resulted in the founding of the famous collections of works, both written and printed, of which Florence possesses such great store. Not unfrequently several different old manuscripts of the same work were found, which however did not coincide in all particulars. The necessity of determining the authenticity of the one or the other, or perhaps of detecting mere formal errors of copyists in one or all of them, opened the way for modern textual criticism, which is now known to have great value in all matters affecting our knowledge of ancient life. In this field the famous Niccolò Niccoli was the first laborer, and may accordingly be called the originator of this species of criticism.[1]

For the promotion of popular culture it is necessary to have not only the appliances of learning, but also the necessary training. Though individual cases here and there are known where persons of unusual talent and energy have acquired profound learning in spite of obstacles and lack of training in early life, it remains true, as a rule, that it is necessary to lay the foundations of learning and instil habits of study into the youth, if it is desired to make a scholar of the man. It has taken generations to fix this idea firmly in the minds of men, and many have not even yet learned the lesson. It should, therefore, add to the renown and credit of Florence that at an early period in her intellectual life she did recognize this principle, and made corresponding preparations for the education of her children. The city's first historian, writing of the year 1338, informs us that already there were in the Florentine schools from 8,000 to 10,000 boys and girls learning to read; 1,000 to 1,200 boys, in six schools, receiving instruction in arithmetic and higher mathematics; and from 550 to 600 arranged in five schools, who were studying grammar and logic.[1] Roscoe says that at a later day "public schools were instituted at Florence for the study of the Greek tongue."[2] From one of Petrarch's letters we learn that he had, almost from infancy, a tutor who taught him first reading, then grammar and rhetoric. This man he praises very highly; and adds that he was said to have taught school for seventy years, giving instruction during that time to a number of pupils, which could be more easily imagined than stated; that among these were many who afterwards became famous, including doctors of laws, masters in divinity, bishops, abbots, and finally a cardinal.[3]

---

[1] Roscoe, 67.

As to the text-books then in use, we know very little. A hint as to one of them is furnished by Mazzei, who remarks in one of his letters that the celebrated work of Boethius on the Consolations of Philosophy, was read in course at every boys' school.[4] "The letters and some ascetic pamphlets of San Bernardo . . . were lessons which were almost popular;"[5] and the Decretal of Gratian was looked upon as "the book par excellence" of the age.[6] Mazzei believed that it was better for boys to "blow out their madness" with other boys at school, than to study under private tutors, which was then as now customary among the rich. Bulwer in *The Caxtons* illustrates the same idea, and was evidently strongly in favor of sending boys to school, in order that they may not bear fruit too soon; and thus be preserved for higher development and greater productivity in the end. In Florence we find also the desire of learning with great rapidity, and at least one attempt to satisfy that desire; for in a letter of Poliziano to Lorenzo de' Medici he writes of a man who "teaches writing in fifteen days, and does wonders in his calling."[7]

---

[1] Villani, VII, 202.

[2] p. 69.

[3] Quoted in Mazzei, I, xx.

[4] II, 13.

[5] *Ib.*, II, 70, n. 2.

[6] *Biog. Univers.*, Art. Antonino.

[7] Roscoe, 459.

We are often told that example is better than precept; but Machiavelli wrote, "Good examples are born of good education."[1] And certainly the Florentines of the Renaissance tried to secure for themselves and their children a good education. Though there were as we have seen schools for all grades of study, the children of the wealthy were principally, if not exclusively, educated at home. As a type of the best instruction of this character, may be taken that enjoyed by Lorenzo de' Medici, who, having had the rudiments of his education from Gentile d'Urbino, was next placed in charge of the learned Cristoforo Landino, who had been "appointed by the magistracy of Florence to the office of public professor of poetry and rhetoric in that city. . . . In the Greek language, in ethics, and in the principles of the Aristotelian philosophy, Lorenzo had the advantage of the precepts of the learned Argyropylus, and in those of the Platonic sect he was sedulously instructed by Marsilio Ficino."[2]

While the laws of the United States appear to have been made mostly for the attraction of immigrants of the lower order of intelligence, the laws of Florence were passed in order avowedly to attract men of intellectual worth. Thus in 1349, after the ravages of the pest had carried off a considerable portion of the population, the magistrates planned to attract many strangers to the city by procuring there the teaching of the liberal arts publicly. Accordingly they passed ordinances offering large salaries for the instruction, and called famous men of learning in various branches from many parts of Italy, who commenced their lectures on the sixth of November of that year.[3] From that time forward, the university then founded continued to flourish with greater or less success, until long after the establishment of the dukedom. At an early day it procured the papal sanction; and in 1365 it received an imperial diploma, signed at Prague, January 2d. Several times it was temporarily closed, as in 1437 and in 1438; and in 1472, at the instance of Lorenzo de' Medici, the principal chairs of instruction were removed to Pisa, leaving in Florence only those of the humanistic branches.

---

[1] La mente di un uomo di stato, Cap. V.

[2] Roscoe, 83.

[3] Ammirato, 374.

Let it be borne in mind, that the university was founded long before the Medici were rulers in Florence; and it reached the acme of its renown and usefulness in the early decades of the fifteenth century, before that family possessed the supreme power in the city. Thus we find in this matter also that it is not to the Medici we must attribute the best of the public works of Florence, as the abject admirers of that family would have us believe. The very year of Cosimo's banishment, Niccolò da Uzzano bequeathed a sum of money to erect a building for the accommodation of fifty alumni of the university, one-half of whom were to be Florentines; but before the building could be erected, Cosimo returned in triumph,—and the money was applied by him to other uses.[1]

As early as 1369 there were five "colleges," or as we should call them, faculties, in the university; namely, theology, canon law, civil law, medicine, and arts.[2] The number of professors at any one time does not appear to have been large. In 1421, for instance, they numbered twenty-one, among whom there is one specified for each of the following subjects; natural philosophy, logic, civil law, decretals of the popes, and astrology. To one professor were assigned the three branches of moral philosophy, poetry and rhetoric.[3] Although the administration of the university was in the hands of the politicians of the day, they tried to secure as instructors the very best men of the age. Such men as Boccaccio, Poggio, Landino, and Lascari would have been ornaments to any university of the time.

The salaries paid for professorial work varied greatly. For instance, a professor of medicine in 1364 received but twenty gold florins per annum, while at the same time a contract was made with Riccardo da Saliceto to give lectures on jurisprudence at a salary of 800 gold florins.[1] The latter seems to have been the highest compensation given to any one connected with the university at Florence; though after the transference to Pisa, salaries of 1050 and 1440 florins are mentioned.[2] When the purchasing power of gold in those days be considered, these were immense salaries for university lecturers. Boccaccio got but one hundred florins for his famous course of lectures on Dante's Divine Comedy, which he began on Sunday, October 3d, 1373. Filelfo, for his humanistic teachings, received 350 zecchini[3] one year, and 450 another. Francesco Bruni, as professor of Latin (1363), had but eighty florins the year; and Conegliano was paid only one hundred florins for his instruction in logic and physics. The professors were not engaged for life or even for any long period of years, but generally for three years only; although they might be re-engaged, as in the case of Argyropylus, who taught in Florence for fifteen years.

---

[1] Prezziner, *Storia del pubblico studio di Firenze*, I, 100-101.

[2] *Ibid.*, 34.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 79.

Every professor was supposed to have an *antagonista* or rival representative of some other method of thought, on the same or a closely allied subject. Among the branches taught at the university were theology,[4] natural and moral philosophy, logic, canon and civil law, physics, eloquence, music, architecture, painting, and sculpture. The last are included by Guicciardini, although Prezziner does not enumerate them among the ordinary courses of the institution.[5]

A chair of astrology was founded in 1368, and seems to have been in estimation for a long time afterwards; for as late as 1475 there was a professor at the university teaching from the astrological poem "Astronomica" of Manilius; and this, notwithstanding the fact that such men as Pico della

---

[1] Prezziner, I, 21.

[2] Burckhardt, I, 499, note 91.

[3] The zecchino had about the same value as the gold florin.

[4] In 1451, theology was taught under sixty-nine subdivisions. (Prezziner, I, 105.)

[5] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 86–87.

Mirandola opposed it with the weight of their learning. Medicine was an important element in the curriculum, although in reality little was known of the science. The study of anatomy was assisted to a certain extent by the law, which allowed the bodies of those hanged to be used for anatomical investigation.[1] Already in 1402 there were four professors of medicine and two of surgery, showing the recognition of the usefulness of the science, even if it was only in its infancy. In the year 1500 there was called to the city for the first time a professor specially for mathematics, who was a monk, "and the leading professor of mathematics of his day." He remained five years in Florence, at a salary of one hundred florins per annum.

Although theology and law led the studies of the university in the importance given to them as regards the number of professors engaged therefor, still there was another branch, in which the university of Florence was in reality the pioneer in western Europe, and in which it did noble work. This was in the introduction of the study of the Greek classics in the original. Some effort in this direction was made at an early day; and by the instrumentality of Boccaccio, Leonzio Pilato, a Calabrian with a fair knowledge of Greek, was brought to Florence to give instruction in that language. Though he was a man of disagreeable manners, Boccaccio took him into his own house, and with his assistance succeeded in three years in translating Homer into Latin, thus for the first time, placing the greatest of all classics within the reach of occidental scholars. It was however the last decade of the fourteenth century before Greek was regularly taught in Florence; and this was in the school of Emmanuel Chrisolora.

Among his pupils were Francesco Filelfo, who later ranked as one of the greatest philologians of the Renaissance, and Poggio Bracciolini, who became the great rival and enemy of

---

[1] Perrens, I, 231.

Filelfo. The meeting of the representatives of the Greek and Latin churches at Florence in 1439 gave a great impetus to the study of Greek in that city, and at the same time the opportunity of getting Gemisto of Constantinople, a celebrated Greek scholar, as professor. When Constantinople was captured by the Turks in 1453, the leading scholars of that city were acquainted with the fact that Florence would gladly welcome them to her gates; and they came, bearing precious manuscripts, for which the Florentines were willing to pay a good price, and rejoiced at the opportunity of getting them. The revival of the learning of Rome was of great value to western Europe, but the lessons to be learned from the writings of the ancient Greeks were even more precious; and their cultivation in the City of Flowers was of the most enthusiastic nature. Poliziano writes a friend that all the city knows the Greek language, and that one might believe he were transferred to ancient Athens.[1] Is it any wonder that Florence has been since that day called the modern Athens? To her came enthusiasts from all parts of Europe, eager to acquire the new learning; and from her they returned to their respective homes, bearing the afflatus of future intellectual life to the nations of the Occident.

We have already seen how eagerly the Florentines collected manuscripts of ancient writings. They were just as diligent in making use of them after they had acquired them. In comparing the different manuscripts of the same author, in making translations, both into Latin for scholars and into Italian for the masses, and finally in preparing editions in print for the more rapid propagation of the new learning, Florence has contributed incalculably to the modern progress in learning. Filelfo brought from the Orient the writings of Aristotle, Demosthenes, and Euripides, and expounded them in public. Translations of Aristotle's Politics and Economics were made by Leonardo Bruni, and of others of his writings, by Argyropylus; the Cyropaedia of Xenophon was translated by a son of the celebrated Poggio, while the father busied himself in translating the works of Diodorus Siculus and part of Lucian; the Natural History of Pliny was translated by Landino; and Diogenes Laertius's Lives of the Philosophers, by a Camaldulian monk named Ambrogio, who translated also some of the writings of the early Church fathers; the various Lives of Plutarch were translated by Donato Acciajuoli and other Florentine scholars, and Poliziano provided Pope Innocence VIII. with a Latin translation of Herodian's History of the Roman Emperors from 180–238; for which he received two hundred scudi, or about $500.00. Other historical works, such as Procopius on the invasion of the Goths, Spartianus' Life of Hadrian, Julius Capitolinus' Lives of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, and Lampridius' Life of Alexander Severus, found also translators in Florentine scholars.

---

[1] See Prezziner, I, 167, and note.

To Boccaccio, however, we must look for the beginning of this enthusiasm for translating the Greek classics, to whom we owe the first translation of the greatest of them all, Homer; and to Florence also we owe the first printed edition of all the works of that incomparable author. This was issued in 1488 in two volumes folio. Of a vellum copy of it still preserved in the library of St. Mark in Venice, we read: "The beauty of the vellum, the width and whiteness of the margins, the freshness and brilliancy of the illuminations, render this copy perhaps the most costly classical bijou in existence."[1] The work contains besides the writings of Homer, a Greek and a Latin preface, and Herodotus' Life of the poet. The first edition of the *Opera omnia* of Xenophon which was ever printed came from Florence, as did also the first edition of the Medea, the Hippolytus, the Alcestis, and the Andromache of Euripides. The Hymns, Epigrams, and Elegies of Callimachus, once librarian of the celebrated library of Alexandria, were first put in type on the banks of the Arno; so was also the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, who in the third century B. C. occupied the same important post; and the same may be said of the writings of another Alexandrine, Clemens, a Christian author who flourished at the beginning of the third century, A. D. Fifty-two orations of the best rhetorician of the second century, A. D., namely Aristides, were first brought to the knowledge of the great public in Florence, as were also the five books of Oppianus, on fishes and fishing, and the celebrated Argonautica and Hymns of the ancient Orphic literature, of uncertain authorship. The finest edition of the writings of Lucian was also a Florentine one, and it is of so fine a character critically that it is said to have almost the authority of a manuscript.

---

[1] T. F. Dibdin, *An introduction to the knowledge of rare and valuable editions of the Greek and Latin Classics.* 2 vols. 4th edition. London, 1827. II, 41.

Many other of the classics were printed at Florence, of which however she cannot claim the honor of having produced the first edition. But in some cases she did produce the best early edition, even of these; as was the case with the writings of Aristophanes, Terence, Aesop, Pomponius Mela, and of the Hero and Leander of Musaeus. To Lascari during his Florentine career we owe the re-establishment of the use of the Greek capital letters, which he had found on ancient coins, etc., and which were introduced for the first time, in printing the *Anthologia epigrammatum graecorum*, which was published in quarto, in 1490.

The world must render thanks to Boccaccio, not only for the first translation of Homer, but also for his own "De genealogia deorum" which he completed about the year 1359, and from which "almost all Europe learned the mythology and symbolism of the ancient peoples, during several centuries."[1] His Life of Dante was the first biography in the modern sense; and his Theseide was the first

---

[1] Geiger, *Renaissance und Humanismus*, 65.

Italian epic poem, and the first use of the eight-line stanza in its classical form.[1] When we consider that Florence had almost two thousand authors, of whom Boccaccio was but one, her enormous influence in the world of letters becomes at once apparent.

It is impossible to follow in their career of usefulness all these works which proceeded from the scholarly labor in Florence, and hence we can but guess at their far-reaching influence. In the case of individuals, however, who came under Florentine influence and thus spread abroad the ideas there acquired, we can gain a somewhat better idea of the measure of that influence, although even here we can but state certain facts, and leave the imagination to pursue the subject further. Thus of William Grocyn we read that he "studied Greek and Latin under Demetrius Chalchondyles and Politian" (Poliziano), and that he "had the honor of teaching Greek not only to Sir Thomas More but to Erasmus himself."[2] Thomas Linacre "became the pupil of Angelo Poliziano, and afterwards shared the instruction which that great scholar imparted at Florence to the youthful sons of Lorenzo de' Medici." He was later appointed tutor to Prince Arthur and royal physician to King Henry VIII. of England; and was the principal founder of the Royal College of Physicians at London.[3] With such concrete examples before us, can we doubt of the extent of Florentine influence in the higher education of Europe? For we are assured that numerous pupils came to Florence also from France, Spain, and Germany, as well as from England;[4] and among Poliziano's scholars were also the sons of the chancellor of Portugal.[5]

To Florence we owe not only the influence of such men, returning to their native countries after having studied there; but, according to Symonds, "the system of our universities and public schools is in truth no other than that devised by Vittorino and Guarino."[1] The scene of Vittorino's activity was Padua, whose university was also a great power during the period of the Renaissance. Guarino, better known as Favorino, from the name of his birthplace, Favera, was a pupil of Lascari and Poliziano at Florence; was one of the preceptors of Giovanni de' Medici, afterward Pope Leo X., and for a time was librarian of the Medicean library of Florence. He was also the chief author of a dictionary of Greek, which was by far the best which had been produced up to his day.

---

[1] *Ib.*, 54.

[2] [illegible] Grocyn.

[3] See *Ibid.*, Art. Lin[illegible]

[4] R[illegible]

[5] *Bibliog. Univer.*, Art [illegible]

No record seems to have been kept of the number of students who attended the various courses of the university, though we are informed under date of 1429 that an immense number of students from all parts of the world were in attendance.[2] The whole number must have been considerable, if it bore any proportion to the four hundred who daily listened to the lectures of Francesco Filelfo; and it is affirmed that the number of Poliziano's scholars alone "surpassed that of a famous university."[3] At the beginning of the fourth decade of the fifteenth century, the professors began to forget that the city of Florence had founded this institution as a public one in the fullest sense of the word; that is, that the lectures should be absolutely free of expense to the students; and they began to charge for the privilege of attending the courses. The students, however, had no intention of bearing this imposition, and in true student fashion raised such a storm about the matter that the municipal authorities were compelled to interfere, and bring the professors to the students' way of thinking. The students wore a plain regulation dress, made of cheap woolen stuff, which was called the cloth of honesty;[4] and they were subject only to the jurisdiction of the university court.

---

[1] *Revival of Learning*, 537.

[2] Prezziner, p. 91, quoting from *Life of Vespasiano.*

[3] Prezziner, I, 161.

[4] Perrens, I, 229.

With the Florentine love of display, it is hardly to be expected that there was any lack of ceremonies, where it was possible to introduce them. The best opportunity for this was naturally the occasion of conferring an academical degree, at the conclusion of a prescribed course of studies. The degrees were various, as they still are, according to the lines of study to which the student had devoted himself. On these occasions the laurel seems to have been literally given the candidate for honors, together with the title of bachelor of arts, master of theology, doctor of laws, or whatever else it might be. The ceremony was in early days performed in the cathedral; but the theologians later had their celebrations apart, in the church of San Salvatore; and the influence of the Medici, with selfish policy, transferred the other ceremonies to their church of San Lorenzo, and on occasion to their own palace.[1] When Giovanni, later Pope Leo X., received the canonical degree, at the early age of thirteen years, the ceremony was performed in the archiepiscopal palace.

The time of final examinations was one of festivity. Previous to the last one, which was public, the candidate went about the city on horseback, accompanied by the beadles of the university and by some of his fellow students, to invite his friends to the ceremony. He hired trumpeters and fifers for the day; and if he passed the examination, he came out from it, preceded by the musicians, and accompanied by his friends, to whom he offered an entertainment, the nature of which was, according to his fortune, a collation, a fête, a play, or a joust.

We are accustomed to think of the masses of the students at the great universities of the Renaissance period as a collection of poor youth, without means or manners; and the majority of them may have been so; but there must have been a strong element of gentility at the Florentine university, where high ecclesiastics of the Church were content to receive instruction, and the pope to send his nephews. Furthermore, among the lecturers we find such names as Machiavelli, Ridolfi, and Strozzi,—names than which Florence itself did not produce higher. The splendid salaries paid the leading professors, enabled them to live in a manner consistent with their recognized place in society. They were not low hangers-on and sycophants of Lorenzo de' Medici, and other men of wealth, but their honored guests, whose presence added lustre even to the greatest household. We are told that Marsuppini had frequently at his lectures on belles-lettres, cardinals, bishops, and the nephews of the then pope, Eugene IV.[1] His more famous rival, Francesco Filelfo, was not only frequently a guest of Cosimo de' Medici, but, in one of his letters, naïvely informs us that the whole city had its eyes turned upon him; "they all love me, honor me, and praise me immensely. My name is on the lips of all. Not only the chief citizens, but even the matrons, when I meet them on the street, give way to me, and show me respect to such an extent that I blush."[2]

---

[1] Prezziner, I, 184.

Such was the zeal for learning during the early decades of the fifteenth century, that the university did not suffice for all the wants of the citizens for higher culture; and there existed another institution which was practically a second and almost complete university, under the Augustine monks at Santo Spirito. This has been designated "as the first of those many private academies to which the free thought and the scholarship of Italy were afterwards destined to owe so much."[3] There was also a society of learned men among the Camaldulian monks in the monastery of the Angeli. Besides these there were other associations, made up of private men, who called lecturers to the city, for their own instruction; and even some wealthy individuals paid lecturers for their own gratification and the instruction of their fellow-citizens.[4]

---

[1] Prezziner, I, 102.

[2] *Ibid.*, 91–92.

[3] Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, 103.

[4] Burckhardt, I, 254; Symonds, as above.

One of the most influential institutions of Florence was the Platonic Academy, which was founded by Cosimo de' Medici, with the avowed purpose of rehabilitating the philosophy of Plato. At that time Christian philosophy was dominated entirely by the writings of Aristotle, largely tinged with the fatalism of his Arab commentators. The idea was originated in Cosimo's mind by his meeting in 1439 with the Greek, Giorgio Gemisto, who had devoted himself assiduously to the study of the writings of Plato. At first a few congenial spirits were drawn together for the discussion of Plato, apparently without formality; and the seed was thus planted, whose fruit should be borne to all parts of Europe. Cosimo selected a gifted youth named Marsilio Ficino to be especially instructed in the philosophy of Plato, with the object of making him the future head of the academy; and never was the promise of youth better fulfilled. Ficino became imbued with a strong love of Plato's ideas, translated his works, and wrote elaborate commentaries upon them; and all his writings were so strongly flavored with Platonism, which he compared and contrasted with Aristotelianism, that he became the greatest of modern disciples of the great Greek idealist.

Under the able leadership of Lorenzo de' Medici the Academy acquired world-wide fame; and included among its members and correspondents the leading scholars of the age, as well as the great patrons of learning throughout Europe. United by invisible bonds, these scholars formed a sort of republic on the model of Plato's republic, somewhat similar to the union once established among the Pythagorians of Magna Graecia; and into this republic some of the learned women of the age also seem to have been admitted.[1] The celebrated king of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, who defeated the Turks, the emperor, the king of Bohemia, and finally made Vienna his capital, was in correspondence with Ficino, invited him to his capital, asked his advice on many points, and collected a magnificent library of manuscripts, many of which he procured from Florence. Ficino's correspondence radiated in all directions, carrying the seed of revolt against Aristotle everywhere, even among the officials of the lords of various cities, as Milan, Urbino, Faenza.

---

[1] Kolb, *Culturgeschichte der Menschheit*, II, 226.

The meetings of the Academy, at first so simple, became formal and luxurious under Lorenzo, who renewed with great pomp the ancient celebrations of the anniversary of the birth and death of Plato, both of which events are supposed to have occurred on the seventh of November. Lorenzo with his intimate friends met at his villa of Correggi, while the larger circle had its reunion in the city. After dinner, certain passages of the philosopher were selected for discussion and elucidation, each one contributing what he could to the debate. The relative advantages and disadvantages of the active and the contemplative life were considered in their various bearings; and spirituality and idealism were cultivated as they had not been for a thousand years. After the expulsion of the Medici from Florence, the meetings of the Academy were continued in the gardens of the Rucellai, a family which were scarcely inferior to the Medici in wealth and talent. Here Machiavelli read aloud his celebrated discourses on the writings of Livy, and his dissertations on war. From ideal philosophy the subject of debate turned on politics; and the Academy was finally abolished by the Medici, again reinstated in power.

But the influence of the Academy did not expire. The revolt against Aristotelianism spread over all Europe, and became part of the Reformation. Reuchlin in Germany; in England, Sir Thomas More, the pupil of Linacre and the friend of Grocyn; Peter Ramus in Paris, who victoriously defended the daring thesis — "Everything that Aristotle taught is false;"[1] the great Erasmus, who imbibed the new learning also from Colet and Linacre; Nicolas of Cusa, in whom may be seen "the final breakdown of scholasticism as a rationalized system of dogma;" Giordano Bruno, his fiery disciple, who was burned at the stake in Rome; Vico, the discoverer of the modern historic method of treating jurisprudence, who read Plato and Tacitus as his "favorite authors, because the former described the ideal man and the latter man as he really is;" finally Rosmini, founder of the new religious order generally known as the Rosminians, who is said to have studied Plato for many years from the translation and commentaries of Ficino; all these and an innumerable host of others less famous, are believed to be the products, direct and indirect, of the Florentine Platonic Academy.[1]

---

[1] *Encyc. Brit.*

A striking example of the pleasure taken by the Florentines in intellectual exercises is afforded by the celebrated poetical contest which took place in the cathedral, Sunday, October 22d, 1441; an account of which is preserved in a contemporary document. For judges of the respective merits of the poems to be submitted, were chosen the secretaries of the Pope Eugene IV., then residing in Florence. The prize was a laurel crown, made of silver. For this notable contest, the cathedral was magnificently decorated, and prepared for the attendance of the signoria in a body, the archbishop and many other prelates, and practically the entire population of the city. Lots were drawn to fix the order in which the contestants should appear; and the assembled multitude was treated to a feast of original poetry from the best minds of the city. Finally, however, the judges aroused the indignation of all present, by declaring that in as much as several of the recitations were almost of equal merit, they adjudged the crown to the church.[2]

---

[1] For a good summary of the history and influence of the Academy see Luigi Ferri: *L'Accademia Platonica di Firenze e le sue vicende. Nuova Anthologia,* Anno XXVI, 3d Ser., vol. xxxiv, pp. 226 et seq.

[2] Prezziner, I, 107, quoting original document. The account given by Perrens, I, 547, differs somewhat from it.

In examining the intellectual life of that period, we must not forget that the wonderful mental activity had a strong physical basis. Warlike entertainments were still enjoyed; and in reviving the literature of Greece, they did not fail to imbibe a love of physical strength and beauty in man. It was considered practically a necessary part of the education of a Florentine gentleman that he should strengthen his body and mind by such exercises as belonged to military affairs. He was to have gymnastics, wrestling, running, swimming, riding, fencing, throwing the spear and javelin,—all this in addition to "the liberal arts and noble sciences."[1] Such training may have made them very rude, according to our conceptions of polite society, or even "intelligent wolves" as Taine calls them;[2] but it certainly rendered them capable of enduring intellectual and physical strains which would ruin the most of our American scholars. Our life is, to be sure, feverish in its haste; but will it be contended that we accomplish more than did the men of those days? Where do we find at present such universal geniuses as the Florence of the Renaissance produced, and men who accomplish as much or more? Must we not admit then that the probability is in favor of their having been able to do so much, largely because of their physical condition, inherited and kept perfect by such physical culture? Taine, in speaking of the career of Benvenuto Cellini, says:—"A body and soul battered in this manner seem to be of porphyry and granite, while ours are of chalk and rubbish."[3]

It has been well said that the history of this period in Italy is one rather of individuals than of nations;[4] and hence, it is in the history of individuals that we may expect to find an epitome of life at that time. From Dante to Michael Angelo there was a succession of great Florentines, whose lives typify the manner of life of the commonwealth. Dante's early love, his entrance into and success in public life, his banishment, wanderings, and writings, give us indeed a most interesting picture of his country and time. And from his great poem we may gather the history, not only of his contemporary world but also of all past time, as viewed through the eyes of his age. War and politics, love and hate, studies of character and custom,—all are there illustrated, and they give a sure source of interpretation to the life of his times. Two centuries later we find Machiavelli, also in banishment, "with his finger on the national pulse," and in his own way giving us an undoubted picture of the workings of national and individual life. See him as he mingles with the rustics of his neighborhood, during the day, forgetting the misery of his exiled existence in the contemplation of their simplicity and easily acquired pleasure; then look on him again,

---

[1] Burckhardt, II, 178–179.

[2] *Philosophie de l'art en Italy*, 106.

[3] *Ibid.*, 117.

[4] Symonds, *Rev. of L.*, 312.

> "At night,
> Doffing his rustic suit, and, duly clad,
> Entering his closet, and, among his books,
> Among the Great of every age and clime,
> A numerous court, turning to whom he pleased,
> Questioning each why he did this or that,
> And learning how to overcome the fear
> Of poverty and death."[1]

Under such circumstances were composed the writings which have made his name at the same time famous and a by-word for centuries.

Between the days of Dante and Machiavelli a new language may be said to have been created; and what a language! the soul of melody, the richness of the east, the fullness to pronounce the curse of the damned or the softest nothings of the breathings of love. Yet all this was done by men, most of whom were either exiles, at one time or other of their kaleidoscopic careers, or at least inmates of the loathed prison, where the literary lights and copyists of manuscripts were largely to be found.[1] This wandering life of the Florentines is an element which seems to us worthy of being strongly emphasized; for it doubtless helped to form that breadth of character and largeness of intellectual range for which they are rightly célebrated. Not only the literary and political men spent a large portion of their life in wandering, but the scientists and the university professors, and the artists, from Giotto to Michael Angelo, all were men of wandering habits, whether from political or professional causes; and all profited no doubt from the varied experiences thus gained. Furthermore, let it be noted that they were generally men of affairs as well as of books, pens, and brushes,—a combination calculated to produce much better results on both their practical and professional work, than it would otherwise have been possible to achieve.

---

[1] Rogers, *Italy*, 136–137.

In science as well as in art, it was an age of beginnings. The mathematics of the ancients were revived, and applied more or less to physics and astronomy. The want of accuracy was still very great, if we may judge by an example recorded by Villani,[2] who says that a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurred on the 28th of March, 1345; but which, according to the almanac of Profazio Giudeo and the Tolentine tables, should have taken place on the 20th of said month. Although astrology was then considered the more important branch of astronomy, if the expression be admissible, still some good astronomical work was accomplished. In 1468 Paolo Toscanelli constructed an immense gnomon in the Florentine cathedral, principally for the correction of the Tables of Alfonso. This instrument was capable of indicating midday to within one-half second of absolute accuracy. In recent times it was restored by Ximenes, and pronounced extremely accurate for the age in which it was constructed.[3] This Toscanelli, it will be remembered, was the same who sent Columbus a letter encouraging him in his idea of seeking the Orient by a western route; and accompanied the letter by a map of the world, which Columbus used on his celebrated voyage of 1492. The principle of the gnomon is that employed to tell the time of day by means of a sun dial. One of the latter, made of stone, was in the olden times placed on the bridge of Santa Trinità.[1] The first clock made in Florence was designed for the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, where it was placed in the year 1353; and the street in which its manufacturer lived was called, in memory of the event, Oriuolo, or Clock,[2] and still continues to bear the name.

---

[1] Mazzei, I, 60–61.

[2] VII, p. 108.

[3] Wolf, *Geschichte der Astronomie*, 124.

In medicine the activity was apparently great; but the extent of the knowledge of those professing acquaintance with the science must have been extremely limited, if we are to judge from the treatment which Lazaro da Ticino, who was supposed to be the best practitioner of the day, gave to Lorenzo de' Medici, during his last illness. This consisted of "amalgamated pearls and jewells, with the most expensive potions."[3] In the Datini papers of about the year 1400 there is a "receipt for making a barrel of healthful wine for preserving and sharpening the eyesight, and for purging the stomach, and chasing pains from the body."[4]

The best known side of the intellectual life of Florence is that which was productive of the untold artistic wealth with which she adorned herself. From the day when Cimabue took the young Giotto from the pasture field, to the present, Florence has been continually a school of art. Here experiments were tried, new colors manufactured, new forms introduced, the possibilities of drawing in perspective tested—and the knowledge thus gained was given to pupils, who thronged to the studios, eager to take part in the creation of works of art, for which the demand was great.

However, even in those days, Philistinism existed, although no Matthew Arnold was there to give it that name. Vasari relates an anecdote of Giotto which illustrates not only the Philistinism of those who had suddenly acquired some property, but also the Florentine wit, of which there was a great deal among the artists. A monied artisan, hearing of the fame of Giotto, came one day to his studio, followed by a servant carrying a shield, on which he asked Giotto to paint his coat of arms. Giotto, considering the man and his manner, asked him nothing more than when he wanted it, and said he would do the work. After the artisan was gone, Giotto called one of his assistants and told him to paint on the shield all the parts of a suit of mail, together with a sword, a knife, and a lance. When the artisan returned to see the work, he was indignant and demanded, "What is this?" "Your coat of arms." "My coat of arms!" "Why yes. Is there anything lacking? If so, I will add it. Who are you, that should come here and tell me to paint your coat of arms? If you were one of the Bardi, that would have sufficed. Who were your ancestors? You are just beginning to come into the world, and you talk of a coat of arms as though you were the Duke of Bavaria." The artisan, in his wrath, left the shield at Giotto's, and went to the magistrate to make complaint against the artist for having ruined the shield. Giotto, on the other hand, entered a counter suit, demanding two florins for the work. Having heard the story, the magistrate decided that Giotto was in the right, and that the artisan must take his shield, painted as it was, and pay Giotto six lire for the painting.

---

[1] Varchi, II, Lib. IX, p. 80.

[2] Ademollo, II, 574.

[3] Roscoe, 327.

[4] Mazzei, I, cxxvi, note 1.

Not only were the Florentines pioneers in the practice of the fine arts, but also in the theory; if it be true, as we are told, that Leon Battista Alberti "was the first author who attempted practical treatises on the arts of design, all of which, but more particularly his treatise on architecture, are allowed to exhibit a profound knowledge of his subject, and will long continue to do honour to his memory."[1]

---

[1] Roscoe, 91.

Among the many inventions in the fine arts, which are attributed to the Florentines, none may perhaps be more important, considering its ultimate results, than that of engraving; for the part now played in our aggregate life by pictures and illustrations of all kinds, is simply inconceivable. This discovery, as in the case of so many other useful things, was really the intelligent application of a hint derived from an accidental circumstance. A certain Thomaso Finiguerra, goldsmith of Florence, was in the habit of testing the progress of his work when engraving on metal, by making an impression of it on sulphur, or sometimes on paper. Another goldsmith, Baccio Baldini, seeing the use to which the idea might be applied, began to engrave on metal with the object of making therefrom impressions on paper. As he was not a good draughtsman, he went to Botticelli to have him draw some designs to be thus copied; and the art of engraving so begun, has branched out in the centuries since gone by, until it now, with its more recently invented allies, employs thousands of people, and gives pleasure and instruction to untold millions.

The highest of the fine arts, or at least the latest to be developed, is music; and here as elsewhere we find Florence in the foreground of progress. It is true, that much of the best music of those early days originated in Holland; but the Florentines had the good sense to bring to their city Isaacs, and other foreign composers, from whom they learned a great deal; then went on with their own development, independently. Long before this, however, we learn of their love of music, and their frequent performance of it, whether good or bad. Their instruments were of many kinds, varying from a two-stringed lyre to the organ; and of vocal music, they had at all times a great deal. Music played an important part in all their public festivities as well as in their private life; as we still find even among the simple peasants of the Tuscan mountains. Lorenzo de' Medici not only composed hymns and carnival songs, but had also a school of harmony, with fifteen members, including Antonio Squarcialupi, one of the best organists and organ-builders of the age.[1] But of all the musical innovations which we owe to the Florentines or any others, the opera will undoubtedly be placed on the highest pinnacle; and this invention is due to the great scholar and poet Poliziano, who, on the occasion of a festival given in honor of Gonzaga, Cardinal of Mantua, composed a play called Orfeo, into which he introduced the singing of lyric compositions.[2] This play, though written in haste, possesses "exquisite elegance;" and has been designated as "the first representation which departs from the pious absurdities called Mysteries." Thus originated the opera.

What then is the lesson which the study of the intellectual life of Florence teaches us? Above all, the universality of man, under favoring conditions. It is well known that Benvenuto Cellini was an "abridgment in high relief" of all the passions and talents of his age; but it is not so well known that his father also, though not celebrated, was as universal; that he was architect, designer, musician, maker of organs, viols, harpsicords, lutes, and harps; that he was a good worker in ivory, and able in the construction of machines; and furthermore, that he was not only educated in the ordinary rudiments of knowledge, but that he also knew some Latin, and wrote verses.[3] If such a comparatively obscure man was thus many-sided, it might be said all-sided, is it not probable that many others were of the same character; and that they are not known to history, only because of there having been then so many men of the same sort?

It is generally supposed that culture gives refinement, and tends to decrease crime. Shall we say, then, that Florence was an exception to this rule or maxim? By no means. If the life of the Florentines of the Renaissance was unrefined according to the ideas which prevail among us to-day, we must judge them, not according to the standard of life here and now, but in comparison with the life of other cities and peoples of the same time; and what a contrast that comparison affords! England, wasted by the hundred years' war with France, and by the wars of the roses; and affording such pictures of life as that given us in Shakspere's Henry IV.; France, under the house of Valois, with its constant internal dissensions, and an English king crowned at Paris; Germany, divided against itself, into a mass of petty principalities, priest-ridden and downtrodden. Where was the intellectual life in any of these countries as compared with that in Florence, which we have tried to sketch? All good or evil must be judged by comparison; for, as Herbert Spencer somewhere says, a positive good may be a comparative evil, and *vice versa.* So all the street broils, all the public executions, by fire, sword, or rope, all the political intrigues of Florence were no doubt evils in themselves, but they were not nearly so bad as the evils in other communities at the same time, and hence were, comparatively speaking, good. The political intrigues of Florence are greatly to be deplored; but they ended at the worst, generally in the banishment of the defeated leaders, leaving the family often in possession of a large part, if not the whole, of their property; while in other cities of Italy, defeat after a political strife meant death for the participants, and often what was worse than death for their wives and daughters; whereas in Florence the women were treated not only with mercy, but almost always with consideration. The Florentines were possessed of an inordinate love of power; but when they had the power, they made a noble use of it, for the public welfare, such as should put our modern politicians to shame. They were strong in body and mind, and possessed of a superabundance of animal spirits, which overflowed often in crime, as well as in play; while their ever-active intellects overflowed in the creation of new works of beauty and usefulness such as the world had never before seen. Having burst the restraints of the Middle Ages, they broke not only the bounds of intellectual darkness and religious narrowness, but also the bands of true civil liberty, according to our conception of it; but that over-active liberty was accompanied by an intellectual activity of rarest proportions; and with the incoming of political servitude, there began the decay of the marvellous intellectuality. Hence it seems a natural conclusion to think that there was some inter-connection between the two. Looked at in this light, it brings us some consolation, while contemplating the modern strides of what seems to be socialism, if it is not anarchy. American activity runs, to be sure, in different channels than did the Florentine; but we have the energy, the constant coming to the front of previously obscure individuals, the wonderful creations in mechanics and engineering, if not in poetry and the fine arts; we have the accumulation of wealth, and the liberality of public-spirited citizens. Let us then hope that, profiting by the lessons of the past, and thus avoiding the pitfalls of its destruction, America, like Florence in a former age, may go forward to the creation of great works of usefulness and beauty, which will be superior to all the products of the past.

---

[1] Burckhardt, II, 181.

[2] Roscoe, 202.

[3] Taine, *Phil.*, 118.

VI.

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.

It is extremely difficult if not impossible for an American who has never been in Europe, to realize what the continental Sunday is, whether in Protestant Germany or in Roman Catholic Austria, France, or Italy. How much more difficult is it then for us to picture to ourselves the condition of religious thought and feeling in Italy at the period of the Renaissance. You have heard of Martin Luther's pilgrimage to Rome, how he there "ran about full of devotional ardor from church to church," and how "the profligacy which he there witnessed, so say the Protestant historians, began to inspire him with prejudice against the head of the Church and his entire court;" and how he left the Eternal City in disgust instead of filled with love, as he had anticipated,—and the Reformation was inaugurated. The present younger generation is so accustomed to look upon the pope as exclusively the spiritual head of the Church, that it is hard to realize that for centuries the pope was a prince, very like his neighbors in his manner of conducting the political affairs of his realm; that he ruled his dominions with a hand of iron, when he was able to do so; that he intrigued with other powers, made war on his neighbors, concluded treaties, and at times broke them without compunction. Especially was this true during the period of the Renaissance, when the papacy under such men as Alexander VI. and Leo X. may be said to have been paganized. In conjunction with this looseness in political morals, there existed a freedom of religious belief even in the very bosom of the church, that is perfectly incomprehensible to one familiar only with the strictness of dogmatic teaching among us in America. It is reported of the family of an American diplomate sent not long since to a Roman Catholic court of Europe, that they were both astonished and angry at the freedom in religious matters there, and exclaimed: "Why these people are not Catholics at all." So it was in Italy in the fifteenth century. The Middle Ages had been characterized "by a perpetual opposition of theory and practice which was peculiarly abrupt;" and the terrible struggle known as the Reformation, seems to have been necessary to bring theory and practice more nearly into harmony.

So long as no opposition to the Church was openly made, people in Italy might believe as little of the dogmas of the Church as they liked; and in truth, many so-called Christians of the day were almost as heathen in their beliefs as the ancient Greeks and Romans, whose writings they so delighted to study. For example, Bembo, a celebrated writer and cardinal of the age, speaks of the "hero Jesus Christ" and the "goddess Virgin;" while on the doors of the Vatican itself the sculptured ornamentation represented the amours of Jupiter and Leda.[1] A good Roman Catholic authority informs us that "Leo X., taken by the beauty of the Greek forms, wanted to convert them to the cult of the true God."[2] As Florence was the chief centre of the classical studies, so was she also an important centre of unbelief; though at the same time she offered all possible proof of her loyalty to the Church, so long as the Church did not interfere in her affairs. She gave refuge to popes in trouble, and was the meeting place for a celebrated council of the churches of the East and West, in which it was attempted to reconcile the two. But when the pope tried to interfere in her foreign or domestic policy, then Florence defied him, suffered interdiction and followed her own devices; even her priests in many instances allowing their patriotism to outweigh their loyalty to the holy father at Rome, and continuing to exercise their religious functions in spite of papal decrees forbidding all celebration of the mass and other offices of the Church, until the city should return to its allegiance to the pope. "The bishops at Florence, like all other ranks, were more citizens in their manner than elsewhere. During the siege by Henry VII. a bishop armed himself and his clergy and mounted on horseback for the defense of the walls. Against the Duke of Athens conspired one bishop, and one against the Medici."[1]

---

[1] Perrens, I, 584.

[2] D. Luigi Tosti (Benedettino Cassinese), *Prolegomeni alla storia universale della chiesa;* Roma, 1888, p. 308.

Human nature offers us many a riddle to solve, and perhaps none more perplexing than the psychological one of the existence in the same individual of qualities the most opposite, making him the very embodiment of a paradox. Thus we are taught that the religion of Christ makes one humane; and yet the Spaniards, with the most fiery zeal in the propogation of Christianity as they understood it, displayed as great cruelty as the world has ever seen. The Florentine, with his love of gayety, looked upon religious matters with an easy eye, liked his church and his pope so long as they were friendly; but saw no inconsistency in using the church building for political meetings or even conspiracies, or for poetical contests on heathen models, or in honoring Plato, for instance, at least equally with the saints, if not with Christ himself. Some of them were entirely lacking not only in love but even in respect for the Church. They seemed to consider it funny to pour ink into the holy water, to put assafoetida into the censers, to introduce goats into Santa Maria Novella, and drive a horse round like mad in the cathedral.[2] Lorenzo de' Medici, the leading spirit of the city, wrote beautiful hymns; but he wrote also songs of the most ribald character; and furthermore had them sung in public, such songs as could now be sung only in the lowest of variety theatres. The art of the time was almost exclusively religious; but could be turned on occasion to the preparation of the carnival festivities and the representation of subjects which would now send their originators to the police court; but were then brought before the doors of the finest palaces with torches and music; and were presumably enjoyed by the women as well as by the men, for most of the songs are expressly addressed to the former.

---

[1] (Tommaseo, *Pensieri sulla storia di Firenze;* Archiv. Stor. Ital. N. S. XIII., Pt. II, p. 6).

[2] Perrens, II, 353.

The Inquisition existed in Florence as elsewhere; but found so little support in public opinion, that it did not become dangerous during the existence of the republic. There were but few trials of any kind on religious grounds; and until the days of Savonarola, there seems to have been but one execution, that of Giovanni da Montecatini, who was burned in the year 1450. However, under the Medicean Duke Cosimo I., the Inquisition acquired unlimited powers.[1] The story of the life, death, and teachings of Savonarola is well known; but how many have stopped to consider what must have been the condition of the Church, when a man who was finally burned as a heretic was offered by the pope a cardinal's hat, "on condition that he would henceforth change the tone of his sermons."[2] It was not really on account of his religious teachings that Savonarola died at the stake; but because he opposed the politics of the head of the Church. He was no quiet preacher, seeking to lead his flock by the paths of peace to a higher realm, but a politician of enormous energy, trying to establish a theocracy, with himself at the head thereof. If he had abjured politics and cultivated the personal good will of the pontiff, he might have risen to the places of highest dignity in the Church.

---

[1] Ademollo, I, 289–291.

[2] Villari, *Life and Times of Savonarola*, II, 48.

Nor was Savonarola the only monk who took part in politics; for a certain Mariano, general of the Augustine monks, who had previously preached to great crowds at San Lorenzo, returned to the city after the flight of Piero de' Medici; and under the guise of religious opposition to Savonarola, he worked to secure the return of Piero, and was the means of communication among the friends of the Medici.[1]

Free thought was permitted, and existed to such an extent that "the Academy of Florence . . . . raised the Platonic philosophy to be the second religion of the State."[2] But scepticism could not be permitted to grow too loud or make propaganda; otherwise it was not at all likely that any questions would be asked as to one's belief. In fact it is largely the same to-day in countries where the state religion is Roman Catholic. The writer has often been astonished at the extreme liberality of Romanists of his acquaintance in Europe, who have told him that no questions were asked so long as they complied with the outward forms of the church. They often added that where one religious body is in overwhelming majority, it can afford to be much more liberal than where it must engage in the struggle for existence. This point seems reasonable, and can perhaps explain why the religious spirit in America is so wide awake; for the supporters of each sect and denomination feel the need of doing battle for the ideas they represent; otherwise one sect would be pushed to the wall by the energy of its rivals. The highest civilization has been attained where man had to struggle for existence, and not where Nature was lavish in the bestowal of gifts for man's life and enjoyment; so is it evidently with the human spirit. Its work is most ardent where it has to combat with great difficulties. Hence the religious aspect of the mind develops most strongly, when driven by opposition or adversity to struggle for existence itself.

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 156–157.

[2] Grimm, *Michael Angelo*, I, 55.

Reformers arose from time to time in Florence, and preached the necessity of leading a higher and purer life. The Florentines were great church-goers as well as great church-builders. But as they built largely as a matter of pride to prove themselves the equal or superior of their neighbors, so they went to church largely for amusement. The Florentine was a lover of the gay and beautiful; and so enjoyed, as he still does, the brilliancy of the mass; nor did he forget the attraction of the female beauty, which was also in attendance.[1] As amusements in the modern form were almost unknown, the Florentines turned the numerous church festivals into pageants and plays, and no doubt thought fully as much of the enjoyment to be gained from them as of their religious signification. Read the life of Savonarola, the greatest of their reformers, and see how large a portion of his influence came from his ability to arrange amusements for the people. Even the monks joined in the dances on the public square; while processions, bonfires, singing classes, etc., continued to keep the people occupied and amused. The early Christian church turned heathen temples into Christian churches, and heathen holidays into saints' days; so this great reformer simply turned the Florentine love of amusement and display into channels which seemed to him more proper, and which certainly tended to increase his prestige with the masses,—the foundation on which he was trying to erect the structure of his theocracy.

The observance of religious teachings is largely a matter of habit; and the great proportion of mankind remain to the grave in the religious body to which their parents belonged. How few men sit down and examine for themselves the grounds of their faith, either in religious or political matters. The vast majority let others think for them, and merely follow in the rut which has been formed by the footsteps of those who have preceded them. The Renaissance was a period of great awakening of the intellectual man in Italy; but it did not there lead to great religious struggles as in the north, where the population is of a more serious nature; especially in Germany, where man seems to be a theorist by nature; and where theory soon becomes practice, so far as it is possible. Examine the socialistic movement of to-day, and where is its stronghold? In Germany,—and not in Italy, the land of light-heartedness. The Florentines were and are impulsive, fond of parade and gayety; and these characteristics manifested themselves as plainly in their religious habits as in their daily life. Among the monks were not only scholars, but also artists; and many of their productions were of a secular nature. Many scholars took orders for the sake of the emoluments connected therewith, and some of the monks wrote with far more regard to the beauty of form or style, than to the holiness of their theme. There is no doubt, however, that there did exist among the people a religious sentiment of good quality; and we must not be misled into thinking them all frivolous, because they enjoyed life in a manner which among us, is generally combined with frivolity. One thing is very necessary in studying the history of any time or people, and that is to judge them, not by your own standard, whether of morals, ethics, or taste,—a standard gained from your own limited experience of the world; but try to transport yourself to their time and place, into the midst of their surroundings, and then judge them leniently, and as far as possible by their own standard.

---

[1] Varchi, III, L. XIV, p. 66–67, gives an excellent word-picture of the flirtations carried on in connection with church-going.

During the Renaissance, the monastic orders were a very important element in all parts of Christendom, when "more than the half of Europe was ecclesiastical property."[1] No where else perhaps, was this more true than in Florence. Here there were, even in the early times, five abbeys, with eighty monks or more; twenty-four nunneries, with at least five hundred women; and ten orders of monks, with more than seven hundred members.[1] Later, as we shall see, their number was even greater. Though the different orders were supposed to exemplify the humility and love for the fellow man, so beautifully taught by the precept and example of Christ, the various orders were not only rivals but often enemies, the one of the other. This is manifest in the great struggle which led to the death of Savonarola; for his prosecutors were the Franciscan monks, more than either pope or people.

---

[1] Grimm, *Michael Angelo*, I, 167.

The life of a large proportion of the monks was not by any means that which we regard as appropriate for the clergy. One of their own number, an abbot and celebrated writer, gives an account of them which is by no means flattering. He says: "These well fed monks, with their wide cowls, do not pass their lives in bare-foot wandering and preaching; but in delicate Cordovan slippers, they sit in their fine cells panelled with cypress wood, and fold their hands over their abdomen. And if they have to stir from their place, they ride comfortably about on mules or fat palfreys, as if for pleasure. They do not fatigue their brains with studying many books, in order that knowledge may not give them Lucifer's arrogance, instead of their monkish simplicity."[2]

Plays or mysteries were enacted in the churches, for the edification of the multitude, sometimes with dire results; as when the church of Santo Spirito was completely destroyed by fire, caught from the fireworks used in the representation of the mystery of the Holy Ghost. Even yet, on Good Friday, the Florentines change their churches into show rooms, as the writer himself has seen,—for instance, the high altar of Santa Maria Novella covered by a piece of painted scenery representing Mount Calvary; on this, three crosses, bearing life-size figures of Christ and the thieves, and about them, gaudily dressed figures imaging the women who were so faithful to the Lord; in the south transept, the model of a lot in a cemetery, with grass and flowers, and a fountain, whose springing waters were imitated by spun glass. Such a display almost shocks a person of cold Anglo-Saxon blood; but to most Italians, there is nothing improper in it; on the contrary they admire it, especially if it be well done. In fact, they go by the thousand to the various churches to see the different designs, at this season of the year, just as one would go to a series of booths at a fair. Of course there are those who take the matter seriously, and pay their devotions in the manner which such representations were doubtless intended to inspire in the minds of an uneducated public; but the majority make light of the whole matter, and enjoy it as a legitimate show.

---

[1] Villani, VII, 203.

[2] Firenzuola, quoted in Burckhardt, II, 235.

A very noticeable feature of the Florentine streets is the existence of large numbers of shrines, which vary in size and elegance from the most ordinary plaster cast of the Virgin to the large and beautiful works of Luca della Robbia, in the richly colored glazing, of which he was the inventor. These were naturally intended to inspire the faithful to prayer, and doubtless did so in days gone by; but they now have that effect but seldom, as the spirit of prayer seems largely to have died out in this people. The shrines are now regarded as public ornaments of the city; and under the law, even the owner of the house to which they are attached, is not permitted to remove them, without special license of the authorities. This is a general law of the new national régime; for the Italians are often poor; and seekers after artistic antiquities frequently offer tempting prices for such objects.

The hundred churches of Florence offered a great variety in architecture as well as size, varying from the vast magnificence of the cathedral to the diminutive plainness of a suburban chapel. As public institutions, they were not only places for public worship of the Almighty, but in reality expressions of public wealth and pride; as witness the commission given by the city fathers to Arnolfo, who was to plan a structure which should exceed anything that the world had ever seen or would again behold. The same spirit prevailed in the building of other churches, which were generally supported by one or more private families of wealth and distinction, who by building a church or chapel, such as the famous one of San Lorenzo, which contains the work of Michael Angelo for the Medici, sought to perpetuate their name to all coming generations by attaching it to that of the Lord of Hosts, not by virtue or devotion, but by display. In this manner, however, the churches became depositaries of the great works of art; and as such are doubly endeared to us, as the preserver of priceless things of beauty which otherwise would probably never have been created, or once created, might have been exposed to the vicissitudes of existence in private houses. The paintings of Giotto in Santa Croce, of Massaccio in Santa Maria del Carmine, and of Ghirlandajo in the famous choir of Santa Maria Novella, have been schools of art for hundreds of years; and have given enjoyment to hundreds of thousands of people, even where they have not awakened religious enthusiasm. In architecture also, the Florentine churches became a source of instruction and inspiration to other countries and succeeding generations. Her cathedral's high altar stands under the first great dome erected in western Europe; and the façade of Santa Maria Novella gave rise to a style of architecture sometimes called Jesuit. Her school of mosaic, called into being and fostered by the requirements of church decoration, has become world-famous; while Giotto's lovely tower, built to receive the cathedral's bells, remains unique and unsurpassed in beauty, after six centuries of existence.

The union of Church and State was in some respects a close one. Not only did the city erect and repair the sacred edifices, but she paid the incumbents; the privilege of refuge was recognized by law, though not always respected by the executors of the law. Priests and monks were entrusted with the keeping of important papers of state, and were not unfrequently the disbursers of state funds. The exchequer of the city was entrusted in Villani's day to the monks of two different monasteries, each in turn fulfilling the duties of the office during six months.[1] In the days of Savonarola's ascendency we find the city, though defying the pope, recognizing God as its head, and itself almost as a theocracy. Whenever special danger threatened the city it became almost a custom in those days to send for a celebrated image of the Virgin, and have it brought with great solemnity into the city. The importance which was attached to this picture is well illustrated by the following occurrence. On the 19th of August, 1499, the signoria ordered that on the 25th of the month the picture be brought into the city; but Vitelli having requested that they have it brought on the 24th, because on that day he wished to give the Pisans battle, the matter was reconsidered on the 21st, and an order issued in accordance with Vitelli's request.[2] The sacredness of such pictures and images in the eyes of the law, as well as of the Church, is shown by an incident which happened somewhat later. One day a young man, who had been gaming and lost, threw some manure at an image of the Virgin in one of the numerous shrines of the city, blaming her for his bad luck. He was observed by a boy who reported it to the authorities; was found and arrested. Having confessed that he did it in his passion at having lost, he was hanged the same night from one of the windows of the Bargello.[3]

Though there existed a certain union between Church and State, it was not so intimate as to permit the direct interposition of church officials in affairs of state, where the church itself was not concerned. The period of Savonarola was to be sure an exception, but only as regarded him personally, not as to the church as such. Indeed the civil power went even farther, and on occasion the clergy were compelled to aid in the support of the state, not only by their prayers but also by contributing of their property to the common fund. Several times the government succeeded in gaining from the pope permission to tax church property in aid of the university, and once for building the city walls. Even against the will of the pontiff the civil power passed a law in 1345, which provided that when any one in orders committed a criminal offence against a layman, he could be punished by the signoria, both in person and in property, "not reserving his dignity;" and whoever should appeal to the pope, not only himself and property, but also the persons and property of his connections and relatives, would be held responsible until the appeal be abandoned.[1]

---

[1] V. III, 41–42.

[2] Landucci, 199, note.

[3] Landucci, 233.

That the clergy were extremely numerous can be gathered from the fact that there were one hundred and ten churches in the city, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. There were also forty-nine nunneries, and a "goodly number" of monasteries; all of which, with but one exception, had their gardens, which were "for the most part very large and beautiful."[2] At the head of all the clergy was the archbishop, who occupied the archiepiscopal palace near the cathedral and San Giovanni. This high office was sometimes filled by members of influential Florentine families, who as such could exercise more or less influence on the affairs of the city. But if the archbishop interfered too much in matters of state, the Florentines understood how to counteract his influence, and did not hesitate to use force if necessary. At one time we find an archbishop in "voluntary exile," living in Rome, because he was not persona grata in his diocese of Florence. In 1258 the Florentines decapitated the Abbot of Vallombrosa for treason;[3] and they hanged the archbishop who took part in the conspiracy of the Pazzi against the Medici, in 1478. While still wearing his ecclesiastical robes, a rope was placed round his neck, and he was hung out of a window of the Palazzo Vecchio, by order of the signoria, without trial. For this action the pope excommunicated Lorenzo de' Medici, who probably had no knowledge of the deed until after its accomplishment, and interdicted the city. This was met on the part of the Florentines by the writing of official letters to all Christian princes, justifying their own action and condemning the course of the pope, and appealing to the leading jurists of Italy for authority to declare that this interdict was *de jure* of none effect and void.[1]

---

[1] Villani, VIII, 113. [2] Varchi, II, 98. [3] Villani, II, 151.

Then, too, Florence has her sainted archbishop, her Antonino, or Little Anthony, who literally went about doing good, not letting his left hand know what his right hand did. Though by right possessed of the archiepiscopal palace and of large revenues in connection therewith, he allowed himself nothing but a bare room to sleep and work in, furnished with but a narrow bed, an old wooden chair and a little table, on which he wrote his elaborate works, mostly regarding the duties of the clergy. Untiring in preaching and in works of charity, he passed his life in a spiritual elevation that seemed almost unconscious of the seething mass of corruption about it, at least was never defiled thereby. On the other hand, Giovanni de' Medici, a child of seven years, was ordained to the priesthood by Pope Sixtus IV., who at one time was an adherent of the Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici; but having failed in that, and the political horizon having changed its aspect, he found it convenient to conciliate the Medici, even at the expense of somewhat contorting the rules of the sacred body of which he was the head. Consecrated a priest at an age when it was impossible for him to understand the nature of the office to which he had been devoted, growing up in an atmosphere of intrigue and social corruption, where appearances were the all-important element in life, and the spiritual was neglected, if not annihilated, is it any wonder that such a preparation for the papacy bore fruit in the brilliant but pagan reign of Pope Leo X.? If the heads of the church were of such a character, what should we expect of those in less high places? Though many noble exceptions are found, as in the case of the good Antonino, the generality of the priesthood could not have been above reproach. Naturally we hear little or nothing of them; as the non-commissioned officers of the army of the Lord get but little more notice than those of secular armies; but we may judge quite accurately of the one by knowing the conduct of the whole body, whether in Church or State. Although artists and scholars of rare merit were found among the clergy, we must not deceive ourselves into the idea that the majority were made up of those classes. The vast numbers of members of begging orders of monks, the immense use made of indulgences, the narrow-minded prejudice of one order against another, though presumably working toward the same great end,—all point to the fact that ignorance and sloth played as great a part among them as did industry and intellect. But the life of the cloister was not always the lazy, useless existence that we are but too apt to think it. Some of the monks studied and taught others, when learning was a luxury, and books more costly than fine raiment. Though often dressed in coarse and ugly cloths, they cultivated a love of the beautiful in those about them, and manufactured in Florence the finest woolen cloths of the day. They cultivated the land and gave to the poor, when mercenary troops destroyed the crops of the peasant, and the vicissitudes of politics often brought the rich to exile and poverty. They gathered the sick into hospitals, nursed them, and gave them as good medical treatment as the knowledge of the times afforded, at a period when hospitals were almost an unknown quantity in England.[1] They were the legatees of charitable bequests, and, so far as we know, administered the trusts honestly and well. The only statistics of births in the city, we have from a thoughtful priest, who for years baptized all the infants of the city, and laid aside after each baptism a white bean, if the child was a girl, and a black one, if it was a boy. From the statistics thus preserved, we learn that the births numbered from 5,800 to 6,000 per annum; and that the number of boys exceeded that of the girls by from 300 to 500.[1]

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 44.

---

[1] St. Bartholomew's Hospital of London has been in existence since the twelfth century; but seems to have been the only one until the reign of Henry VIII., who converted a number of confiscated priories into hospitals.

Living in an age as we do at present, when an honest effort is occasionally put forth to unite the followers of Christ to work in harmony together for their common aim, it would be interesting to follow somewhat in detail the doings of the great council held in Florence in 1439, for the purpose of healing the great rupture of the Greek and Latin churches, and bringing into one fold all the sheep which for centuries had been separated by jealousy, envy, and mistrust. For this purpose there collected in Florence one of the most imposing of the many companies of great men that have met within her walls. The emperor of Greece, John Paleologus, with the patriarch of Constantinople and many bishops, all habited in oriental splendor, and Pope Eugene IV., with a brilliant suite of learned ecclesiastics, clad in magnificent brocades, and vestments rich in embroideries, here met in solemn council; and from January to July they discussed the basis on which the two great branches of the Christian Church might unite. Experience taught then, as it has so often done since, that it is ignorance which is mostly the foundation of envy, hatred, and prejudice. As day after day passed in mutual intercourse, acquaintanceship ripened into friendship; the hillocks of difference and difficulty, which had been magnified into mountains by the mists of ignorance and of prejudice toward each other, assumed their true proportions, when the mists were dissolved by the sun of brotherly good will and affection. To be sure the emperor had a worldly purpose to gain, and the necessities of his situation, threatened as he was by the approach of the Turks, may have assisted in the broadening of his mind. But the fact remains, that before the end of the council, there existed between many of the 160 bishops and abbots of both churches, there assembled, as well as between emperor and pope, an amount of good feeling and mutual respect, which had seemed impossible on first meeting. On the 6th of July there was published with imposing ceremonies in the vast cathedral the great document which had been accepted by the council for the reunion of the churches; and the members of the council, their work accomplished, dispersed. Unfortunately those who had stayed at home, and had not come under the gentle influence of the intercourse of those months on the banks of the Arno, were not willing to accept the conclusion of the council,—and the agreement came to naught.

---

[1] Villani, VII, 202.

One of the most usual forms of expressing religious enthusiasm at that period was by going on a pilgrimage, to the Holy Sepulchre if possible; if not, then to some nearer goal, to the tomb of St. Peter at Rome, or to some local relic or revered image. As travelling was difficult and more or less dangerous, it was usual to organize companies for the purpose of making the pilgrimages in common. After great preparations of proper costume and arrangement of private affairs for a more or less prolonged absence, mass was said and the communion taken; and with hymns and prayers the company started off on their journey. In a letter of 1399 written by Francesco Datini, a wealthy business man of Florence and Prato, we have a description of one of these local pilgrimages, which furnishes us with a curious picture of one side of Florentine life of the period. His religious zeal induced him to take twelve men with him, for whom he bore the entire expense of the journey. The pilgrimage was only to the little town of Arezzo, forty-five miles distant, and was organized by the bishop of Fiesole, who, says the correspondent, "was our father, guide, and spiritual chief." For nine days they were on the way, during which time they were not allowed to undress, change their clothes, or sleep in a bed. They were clad in white linen, walked barefoot, and carried a scourge in the hand, with which they beat themselves. No meat diet was permitted during the pilgrimage; but our pious correspondent took with him, packed on a horse and two mules, a number of boxes filled with every kind of confetti, of every kind of cheese, fresh bread and biscuit, cakes, sugared and without, "and many other things which pertain to the life of man," as he naïvely adds. During the heat of an Italian summer, the abstinence from meat food is no great privation; and many Italians eat no meat in summer, even when not making a pilgrimage. We cannot help thinking that for many of those who took part in such pilgrimages, it was largely a matter of enjoying a holiday in pleasant company. Certainly the amount of deprivation did not exceed if it equalled that of "roughing it" on our western frontier; and how many of our men are but too glad to have the opportunity of spending a portion of the summer in this manner.

If ignorance is the cause of envy, hatred, and misunderstandings, how much more is it the very kernel of superstition. Though the average of intelligence in Florence during the Renaissance was unusually high, we must constantly bear in mind that the natural sciences were not yet developed to an extent commensurate with the progress which had been made in art and letters. As superstition has freest play in reference to matters which appear inexplicable on account of our ignorance of the laws of nature which govern them; so the one great enemy of superstition is the study of natural science, by which the knowledge of cause and effect in things mundane is advanced. Bearing in mind how little of the workings of nature was then really known, we must not be surprised to find that even the leaders of thought frequently indulged in superstitious practices. When we read that the popes, who were supposed to know the will of heaven by inspiration, consulted the stars in reference to important matters, that the members of the Platonic Academy of Florence adopted the ancient method of opening a copy of Vergil, and accepting the first passage which met the eye as a prophecy of the future, we are prepared to understand the force of a simile used by the historian Cavalcanti, when he writes: "It is a natural thing that where the lady goes, there goes also the servant, and where the general goes, his suite goes too: and thus the heavenly bodies, like the ladies and generals above, regulate human affairs below."[1] Machiavelli, with all his learning and insight into human nature, acknowledged his belief in spirits; and the great historian Guicciardini, declared that he had seen them;[2] while Landino, one of the profoundest thinkers of the age, actually drew the horoscope of religion, and expected from a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, a great religious reform to commence on the 25th of November, 1484.[3] Because, at one time, conflagrations in the city became very numerous, we are told by a serious historian that they were believed to portend future evil to the republic; and an eclipse of the sun, and even fighting among the lions kept as pets of the city, were interpreted in the same manner.

Superstition was even officially recognized; as in the case of the Pisan war, 1362, when the authorities had the hour of departure of the troops fixed in accordance with the dictum of an astrologer; and suddenly changed the route they were to take through the city, apparently because it was remembered that troops which had left the city on a former campaign against Pisa, having passed through the Borgo degli Apostoli, had been defeated; and so the Via Porta Rossa was now chosen, with the hope of thereby escaping the bad augury.[4] Even as late as the opening of the sixteenth century, it was thought expedient, at a time of political excitement, to have brought in from a country church a famous picture of the Virgin, and institute religious processions, the night before the election for city officials, "in order," says the chronicler, "that God may give us a good and wise leader."[5] After the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy, and the execution of Jacopo Pazzi, it chanced to rain a great deal; and the superstitious, believing the rain to be sent as a punishment for having allowed the interment of the remains of such a wretch in holy ground, had the body exhumed, and thrown into a ditch near the city walls. Not even here was the poor corpse permitted to rest; but its further abuse is too shocking for description.

---

[1] *Istoria Fiorentina*, I, 559, Liber X.

[2] Perrens, I, 258, note.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Burckhardt, II, 284.

[5] Landucci, quoted by Perrens, II, 411.

Every unusual occurrence was interpreted as signifying something particular for the city; the appearance of a comet in the sky, the death of a prominent personage; a mischance to an ancient statue of Mars, as foreboding a fearful catastrophe for the city, and so on indefinitely. The publication of the excommunication of Savonarola occurred on the day on which news of the fratricide of Cæsar Borgia, the son of the reigning pope, reached the city; and the friends of the famous monk and political leader at once interpreted it as a sign sent from God to the pope that he had erred in pronouncing the excommunication. Savonarola's bitter enemies, the Franciscans, were the occasion of elaborate preparations for an ordeal by fire, to prove the truth or falsity of the great reformer's mission. His most ardent admirer, Fra Domenico, eagerly offered to go through the flames for him, and stood ready to do so. The Franciscans demanded that he change his clothes, over which a charm might have been cast by Savonarola; and also that he be kept at a distance from his chief, until the moment of entering the fire, in order to prevent the possibility of Savonarola's exercising any magic spell over him.

Superstition was not confined, however, to the clergy or the ignorant. It is a fact to be borne in mind, that in the list of the university studies of the period, astrology was given no mean place. It is true that a few leading spirits, such as Pico della Mirandola, had arrived at a point where they saw the folly of taking the matter seriously; but it was a long time before the men even of high attainments and endowments could be induced to disbelieve in the possible truth of such theories. There was in Florence a certain Maestro Pagolo, an astrologer by profession, who seemed to regard his calling as sacred. He lived like an ascetic, despised worldly possessions, except books. He practiced medicine with success, but only among his friends, and then only on condition that they went to confession.[1] Landucci mentions among the celebrated men of the middle of the fifteenth century, "Master Pagolo, physician, philosopher, and astrologer of holy life;" who, according to the editor, was the famous astronomer Toscanelli;[2] and is probably the same to whom Burckhardt here refers. Even one of the celebrated family of Capponi was an astrologer, and forced his son to enter on a business career, in order that he might avoid a dangerous wound on the head, which astrology taught would threaten him.[3]

There remains however one aspect of the whole matter, which is well worthy of consideration, although it is generally neglected; and it comes from the fact that the dream of the philosopher of one age often becomes the theory of the scientist of another. How much merry-making has there been for years, if not centuries, at the idea of the ancient philosophers, that all known substances emanated from one, or at most from four, elements; yet the newest theory as to the origin of matter, supported by no less a name than that of the world-renowned Sir William Thompson, now Lord Kelvin, brings us to the same conclusion; namely, that all matter is but different forms of one substance, the all-pervading ether; that instead of seventy-odd elements, requiring as many different fiats of creation, there exists but one substance in the universe. Thus we find the dream of the philosopher reappearing in another form, based on scientific evidence and reasoning. So also with astrology, perhaps. Through the relative positions of the planets, sun, and moon, the old astrologers thought to interpret the future of men and public movements. They sometimes succeeded and often failed; and their so-called science is now considered unworthy the examination of serious men. But was there not some truth underlying their false conclusions? It is now generally admitted that spots on the sun influence very materially the meteorological conditions on the earth; and these in turn have a very direct influence on man, perceptible at least on many nervous and sickly persons, if not on the strong and healthy. Observations made in the far north by General Greeley and his party show, it is said, that the planets have a direct influence on the tides of the ocean; if so, then certainly on the currents of the atmosphere, which comes much more easily under the influence of gravitation; if on the air-currents, then on meteorological conditions, which in turn exercise great influence over human affairs. If it be admitted, what statistics have long shown to be true, that the amount of rainfall has a direct influence on and proportion to the number of marriages and births, and if it be admitted also that the meteorological conditions are largely produced by the action of sun, moon, and planets, then it follows that the position of the heavenly bodies does have an influence on the individual and on the affairs of state. The great mistake of the astrologers, then, appears to have been, not in the general foundation of their belief, but in its application to individual cases, where the conditions of the problem are too intricate to enable us to solve it.

---

[1] Burckhardt, II, 281.

[2] pp. 2–3.

[3] *Ib.*, II, 347.

One of the greatest elements of strength in the Roman Church is that it claims to possess, and is believed by the faithful to hold, the keys of heaven; and accordingly, that whatsoever the Church binds on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever the Church loosens on earth shall be loosed in heaven. If this premise be granted, it is perfectly logical for the Church to claim by its indulgence to free the recipient thereof from more or less suffering both in this world and in the world to come. We do not wish to enter into any theological discussion as to the merits of the case, but merely to point out the tremendous temptation which any body of men, claiming such power, would naturally experience, and the correspondingly natural tendency to corruption. Human nature being what it is, and has been for centuries, if not for all past time, experience and history teach us that, for the vast majority of mankind, the only way to remain pure is to keep out of temptation; and Christ himself recognized the fact when he taught us to ask in prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." The dogma of the infallibility of the pope had not in those days been declared; and it was permitted even to the faithful to doubt the perfection of his judgment. The pontiffs then held sway over a temporal kingdom, carried on wars, and required money for other secular matters, just as much as any earthly potentate. If the pope could sell entrance tickets into heaven, would he not be doing a great good work, by delivering so many people from the unpleasantness of purgatory, and conferring on them years, nay centuries of bliss? He did not pretend to have the power of taking souls from hell; but taught that he could relieve them from all "temporal pain undergone, either before death in this world, or after death in purgatory." At the same time he would be increasing the glory and pre-eminence of the church militant, which was also a holy cause in his eyes. Protestants are apt to think with Luther that it was a damnable marketing of God's mercy; but, though we would not defend the action, we can see that by a sort of sophistry, the worldly pontiffs of the age, as they undeniably were, may have justified their action to their own consciences. The Florentines, with their gay and happy dispositions, were not likely to ask with Luther whence the pope derived his power of releasing men from the natural result of their deeds; but were only too glad to rid their consciences of any remorse they might possess, and indulge in their mirth, unrestrained by any gloomy misgivings as to the distant future. This may appear unreal to those of Puritanical origin; but even in this last quarter of the nineteenth century, the writer himself has heard a university student of good standing say, in all seriousness, he went to mass once a year, just before Christmas, for the purpose of commencing the new year with a clear conscience and a clean record on high. Protestantism, republicanism, and Sunday schools have taught us to study and meditate on such subjects from childhood; but we must not lose sight of the fact that the greatest portion of the Christian Church has grown up under a different régime from that under which we live; and that questions which appear natural enough to us never enter the mind of thousands born and bred under other skies. To them the church is something to be revered and obeyed, to be enjoyed, to be with them at baptism, marriage, and death; but theology is a study for the clergy and not for the laity. They are taught that the doctrine which is best for us, is given in the book of prayer; then what need is there for us to have the entire Bible with its difficult passages, which may be pitfalls for the unwary, and are not necessary for the saving of our souls? Reasoning somewhat in this manner, we imagine, the Church of the Renaissance gave its children happy festivals, sold them indulgences for the remission of penalties to be endured here or hereafter, left them with light hearts and clear consciences, delighted the eye with its magnificent pageants, pleased the ear with its beautiful music, offered in its monasteries a refuge from sorrow and poverty, and soothed the last moments of life with assurances of eternal peace. What wonder then that many were content with her as she was, and so did not sympathize with those who looked beneath the surface, who examined the motives and ultimate results of action, and who sought for a form of religion which would satisfy the longings of an earnest, self-examining, northern heart. For the merry, unthinking southerner of warmer blood, however, the forms and ceremonies of the Roman Church were, and still continue to be, both pleasant and satisfactory.

VII.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

One of the greatest surprises in Florentine history is the fact that this people which was so violent in its political quarrels, so magnificent in its patronage of the arts, so simple in its home life, and so lavish in its entertainments, was at the same time a nation of business men. Yet such is the fact, often remarked on by themselves and marvelled at by historians. One of their proverbs reads: "Chi vuol che il mento balli, alle mani faccia i calli:" that is to say, Who wants his mind active must make his hands hard; or more literally translated though not so agreeably to modern ears, Who wants his mind to dance, must make corns on his hands. The Florentines of the Renaissance, instead of adopting the Aristotelian idea that the highest good consists in the *Θεωρία*, or contemplative vision of God, to the neglect of the practical affairs of life, were of a very different opinion, namely, that the best result is obtained by a union of the practical and theoretical, of the physical and intellectual.

We are so accustomed to think of the Italians as lazy, that it is difficult to realize that the race we are studying was one of the most industrious people which have ever made a name for themselves in the world's history. Only after the Medici became installed as princes, did leisure become fashionable; and men began to think more of display than of culture and business. The Strozzi palace, the pride of Florentine domestic architecture, is now inhabited by a prince bearing the old family name, who is said to lead a do-nothing club life;

his ancestor, however, who had the plans of that palace drawn, and with so much finesse commenced the erection of the building, bore no princely title, but was a private citizen and business man like his neighbors, though possessing more money and ambition than the majority.

All business and even professional life centered in the guilds; and only from a study of these can one gain an insight into the business methods of the age. There was a large number of them, as every calling in life possessed its own independent one, or was affiliated to one. They varied greatly among themselves, in wealth and in the amount of influence they exercised in the affairs of state. At the head of them all stood that of the judges and notaries, who, not being business men, would not detain us here, if it were not for the important influence of the notaries on business methods. For to Florence we must look as the author of modern notarial law and custom, as we do to Bologna, as the modern source of Roman law. Whoever stops to consider the importance of notarial functions in life to-day will admit that this legacy from Florence, which is rarely mentioned, is not the least of her gifts to modern civilization. If we may judge the whole class of notaries from Mazzei, whose letters have furnished us with a great deal of information regarding life in Florence in his day, they must have been a very superior set of men; for men such as he, are rare in any time or country.

The second guild was composed of the merchants of Calimala. The name is still retained by a street of the city, which was formerly the centre of the trade of this guild. Their business was the importation of dry goods, principally from France; and by processes known only to themselves, so to treat these cloths that they assumed an entirely different appearance, and were consequently enhanced in value. More than ten thousand pieces of cloth were thus treated annually, which were of the value of over three hundred thousand gold florins.[1]

---

[1] Villani, VII, 203.

As we send cottonseed oil to France and receive it back as olive oil, so France in those days appears to have sent its woven fabrics to Florence, and bought them again under the name of Florentine cloths.

Next in order came the guild of bankers and money changers. This was the guild of the Medici, and of many other of the leading families of the city. The Florentines were the great bankers of the age, and made their city the chief money market of the then civilized world. In the fourteenth century there were eighty banks in the city, for which were coined from 350,000 to 400,000 gold florins per annum, besides 20,000 pounds of subsidiary coin.[1] Probably the most disastrous financial failure of the Renaissance was that of the Bardi and Peruzzi families, the Rothschilds of their time, who until the failure far surpassed the Medici in riches and honors. The Peruzzi had loaned King Edward III. of England, 135,000 marks sterling,[2] with which to carry on his wars with France; and the Bardi had loaned him 180,000 marks; and he being unable to pay his debts, there was nothing left for the creditors to do but declare bankruptcy. The disaster was terrible, and many families were brought to ruin by the fall of the banks.

Florence continued nevertheless to hold her position in the financial world, though a new family became the chief of her banking houses; and the financial transactions of kings, of the popes, and of the business world generally, at home and abroad, were committed to her care. In 1422 there are said to have been seventy-two exchange offices collected about the Mercato Nuovo, which did a business of two million gold florins yearly.[3] The extent of the Florentine banking operations gave rise to the invention of exchange, without which our modern international intercourse and trade would be practically impossible.[1] Banking for the home government was an important business, for which the various houses competed with each other. Of this the Medici finally acquired the practical monopoly, and even merged the public funds with their own,—one of the measures that show their manner of weaving their coils about the public. They started their popularity by giving largely of their private means to public objects, and thus gained the popular good will and confidence; then when they felt themselves secure of popular favor, they helped themselves without compunction to the contents of the public purse.

---

[1] Capponi, I, 251.

[2] Villani says that one mark was equal to more than four and a half gold Florins (VII, p. 186).

[3] Burckhardt, I, 77.

In the early days the Church opposed the loaning of money on interest, and the receiving of any interest whatever was looked upon as usurious. Even to the end of the fourteenth century we are informed that "it was considered usurious for any one to make a loan which was not drawn up on official paper, and where, in the instrument itself, it was not stated that the loan was made gratuitously."[2] It is affirmed also that usurers were looked upon with the same repugnance as murderers, and also denied burial in consecrated ground.[3] But the possessors of money were not always willing to loan it without compensation; and those who needed it were often perfectly willing to pay for the use of it; so the matter was regulated in the end by the law of supply and demand, which is the only healthful basis of business in any form. Early in the fourteenth century a law decreed the punishment of decapitation for any who should give or receive more than five per cent interest per annum; but it did not succeed in regulating the rate, which varied from five to twenty-five per cent, even the government at times being compelled to pay enormous rates for its loans.

---

[1] Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, I, 89.

[2] Mazzei, I, 246 and note 1.

[3] *Ib.*, I, p. xiv.

One branch of the banking business must not be lost sight of, as it was not only one of the means of increasing greatly the wealth of individuals, but was also the beginning of a new feature in State life. This was the loaning of money to the community, for a fixed time, at a certain rate of interest. At first it seems to have been imposed upon the banks as a necessity of statecraft; but having once tasted of the profits of such an arrangement, they were more than willing to continue it. A new government bureau was established in order to keep the accounts of the public loans, and this was called *il Monte.* Sometimes instead of calling on the banks for a loan, the city authorities divided the amount of money needed for public use into portions according to the rate of assessment of the citizens; and each one was called upon to contribute his share of the desired loan. He received therefor credit in the books of the monte, and the promise of a certain rate of interest yearly. The rate of interest varied from three to twenty-five per cent; but sometimes the government entirely failed to meet its obligations. The government having a monopoly of salt, paid its debts several times in that article, authorizing the recipients to sell it to the retail dealers at a higher price. The monte was founded in 1222, when the account book then opened received the name of the "Book of seven millions," from the amount of the loan. In 1343 another devise was hit upon, in order to induce men to contribute more freely to the governmental loans. This was the institution of dowries for young people, paid for by their parents or friends, by means of loans to the government. At first the government made the tempting offer of eighteen per cent payment on the money thus invested with it, but afterwards reduced it to five. The existence of such a department of the government necessitated the appointment of special officials, who were given jurisdiction over matters of bail, securities, etc., and also over the general officers of the state revenue, when accused of committing fraud or error in the discharge of their duties.[1]

---

[1] Varchi, vol. III, Lib. XIII, p. 36 et seq.; Reumont, I, 37–38.

The wool guild was the richest in the city, and produced yearly from 20,000 to 23,000 pieces of cloth.[1] Most of the raw wool was imported from England and Spain, as the Italian sheep did not grow the finer qualities, which were much sought by the Florentine weavers. A manuscript of the fifteenth century estimates the number of sheep in Tuscany at one million,[2] which fact shows that much of the wool consumed must, however, have been of domestic origin. The art of dyeing was better understood here than elsewhere; and one of the celebrated families acquired its name in the thirteenth century from the fact that a member of it discovered in the Orient the method of producing a beautiful red dye, which became the fashion, and thus made the fortune of the discoverer and his descendants. This is the family of the Rucellai, which is still living in Florence. Strange to say, the perfection of the treatment of wool in Florence was due to a monastery, whose members were called Humble Brothers.[3] Their church of All Saints yet remains standing, having over its main portal a beautiful piece of Luca della Robbia's famous work; but the region which these gifted and industrious monks filled with their carding, weaving, and dyeing houses, is now occupied by hotels and shops for the gain of foreign gold.

Another guild had for its members the doctors and druggists. Though they were always counted as one of the major guilds, they do not seem to have played an important part in the public affairs of the community, at least not a noisy one.

Florence has still a considerable silk industry, though its manufactures do not now hold the position in the world at large which they once did; for the city of Lyons alone now possesses four times as many looms as the whole of Italy. But in the period under consideration, the Florentines were second to none in the beauty and amount of their silk weavings. The guild in which this trade centered was therefore one of the principal ones in the city. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century the weaving of cloth from spun gold was introduced into the city,[1] and was probably carried on by members of the silk guild. The chief shops of the guild were in the narrow street which still continues to be the principal thoroughfare between the parts of the city divided by the river Arno, namely, the Via Por Santa Maria. Mazzei remarks that the merchants in the midst of their traffic thought of things higher and purer than mere gain.[2] As an illustration of this may be cited the fact that one of the silk manufacturers occupied his leisure hours in writing a treatise on the then condition of the silk trade and manufacture. Not even the name of the author is known, but the manuscript still exists, and its contents were published some time ago by a learned antiquary of the city. Here is an account, extending into the minutest details, of the implements employed in the manufacture, of the sources of the supplies of raw silk, of the methods of making the various shades and colors, and of their application in dyeing the delicate fabrics, of the market prices of the various qualities of silk, etc. Thus we have brought before us a most lively picture of one of the principal industries of the time; and we can not but admire the man who loved his trade so much that he thus spent his leisure in preparing for posterity a picture of contemporary life, on one of its sides which is mostly lost to history, because it does not attract the attention of the general chronicler.

---

[1] Varchi, II, 121.

[2] Printed in Roscoe, 429.

[3] Ademollo, II, 706.

Although mulberry trees probably grew in Tuscany from remote times, we find no record of them before the fifteenth century; but the silk industry existed in Florence long previous; for in the records of the silk guild, as early as the year 1225, it is shown that more than three hundred and fifty persons were "matriculated" in the corporation. The finest quality of raw silk used in Florentine manufacture was brought from Spain; and this quality heads a list of nineteen kinds given in a price list of the fourteenth century. By a law of 1440 it was enacted that on every *podere* or farm, there should be planted yearly five mulberry trees, until there were fifty on the place; and two years later, it was forbidden to export raw silk, silk worms, or even mulberry leaves. The officials of the guild evidently believed in direct business dealings, or at least in limiting the work of middle men; for in the by-law of 1376 there is a provision, according to which no man was allowed to deal in the goods manufactured by the guild, as agent or broker, who had not taken an oath before the consuls or notary of the guild, and that with good surety approved by two of the guild's consuls, that he would do nothing contrary to the prohibitions of the by-laws. In 1472 there were in the city eighty-three "magnificent shops," devoted to the silk trade; and from 15,000 to 16,000 people in the city and surrounding country "took part" in the industry. But the "too much governing" of the Medici princes of the sixteenth century ruined the industry, and the centre of its activity passed to another people.

---

[1] Burckhardt, I, 77.

[2] I, p. xxiii.

The seventh and last of the major guilds was that of the furriers. Although the climate of Florence is a great deal milder than ours, it is rather astonishing that its inhabitants have always delighted to make extensive use of furs; and accordingly their furriers were important men. On a day when the majority of Americans would probably be content to wear a light overcoat, many a Florentine dons a fur-lined coat, as though the thermometer were at zero. Then too, in the fifteenth century, as we see by the portraits which still exist, fur was often used by the men as trimming on their dress coats, as is still the custom among the Hungarians, Poles, and Russians.

The usual number of minor guilds was fourteen, constituted as follows: (1) Butchers, (2) Shoemakers, (3) Iron workers, (4) Leather dressers and trunk makers, (5) Builders and stone cutters, (6) Wine merchants, (7) Bakers, (8) Oil merchants and pork butchers, (9) Linen drapers, (10) Locksmiths, (11) Makers of armor and swords, (12) Harness makers, (13) Carpenters, (14) Inn keepers.[1] The internal organization of these guilds was of the same nature as that of the major guilds; and they had their regular representation in the general government, the amount of which varied from time to time.

The corner stone of liberty is supposed by many to be local self-government. This idea Florence carried to its logical extreme, making of each guild a little republic of itself. What was the result? The power of numbers and organization was learned; but self-control and the sense of duty, which are the true bases of political liberty, were not imbibed; and the result was periodical anarchy, ending in slavery to the greatest flatterer. One of their own historians remarks that "He who builds on the plebs, makes his foundation on rubbish;"[2] and he affirms that the father of Cosimo de' Medici gave his sons the following advice: "Never advise anything against the will of the people. Even if the people want something useless, do not talk in the manner of counsel, but as with mild and lovable reasoning."[3] Whether or not this statement is historically correct, we cannot say; but it illustrates so exactly the method of the Medici, that it is valuable in showing the result of specious demagogism allied with popular liberty which does not rest upon a foundation of civic virtues.

The writer was witness of a Florentine mob on "Labor Day" (May 1st, 1891), which was simply a demonstration of the power of numbers, discontented because they were not so rich as their neighbors. If in these days, with strict discipline and the presence of the national army, such excesses could be committed as a mere freak, what must have been the state of affairs in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the masses were, one might say, officially armed, and felt their rights as well as their power. We are accustomed to think of our own day as especially democratic; but we must not forget that there was a time in Italy, when the democratic spirit ruled as strongly, if not more so, than it does even among us to-day. They even passed laws disfranchising the noble and specially rich, because they had made themselves obnoxious to the masses. And herein they offer us an excellent lesson; for driving these men out of power deprived the city of men who might have been capable of combatting successfully the demagogism of the Medici. So the city found out but too late that it had deprived itself of the power of resistance, while allowing itself to be bound with the golden chains of the Medici, which were fastened upon them, while they were ignorantly shouting "Liberty."

---

[1] Ademollo, I, 307.

[2] Cavalcanti, I, 505.

[3] *Ib.*, I, 263.

There were in Florence two main centres of trade which were called respectively the old and the new market. Both of these are now materially altered from their condition in the fifteenth century. Within the past three years, all that was left of the region once known as the old market (Mercato Vecchio) has been denuded, to make place for a large open square, now ornamented with a colossal equestrian statue of Victor Emmanuel; and the square is to be surrounded with handsome business blocks. During the Renaissance this was the quarter in which were concentrated the butcher shops, the groceries, and the stalls of the green grocers. Later it became the Jewish Ghetto; and more recently, it was the "Five Points" of Florence, the haunt of vice, and the hiding place of criminals.

The name Mercato Nuovo (new market) was at first applied to an open space where market was held, which was surrounded by numerous shops. At present the name designates a beautiful open arcade, built on that old square in the sixteenth century by Duke Cosimo I., which is now used on Thursdays as a flower market, and on Fridays as the straw market, where the finer qualities of straw used in making hats, etc., are offered for sale in large quantities. This region was given special privileges under the old laws, conferred in the interests of business. For instance it was forbidden to enter the precinct bearing arms; and debtors were here free from liability to arrest.[1] Otherwise the law against debtors was very severe, subjecting them not only to ill treatment on the part of their creditors, and to imprisonment by the municipal authorities, "with scant provision, crowded, and packed together in a filthy place," but, according to a law of 1398, even forcing them to act the part of public executioner, than which a more disagreeable task can scarcely be conceived.[2] One law provided that whoever became bankrupt should be disqualified forever from holding any office in the community. It seems however to have been in force but a short time. Another law was passed providing that when the great bell should ring, summoning the citizens to a general council, no one should be subject to arrest for debt. A revolutionary law provided that no one should ever be subject to arrest for debt; but the law seems to have died with the revolution which gave it birth.[3]

The judicial system of Florence was peculiar; but here we shall not enter upon it further than to call attention to the fact that there was a special court for the adjudication of disputes arising out of differences in commercial transactions. This court was called the *Mercanzia*, and was composed of six judges, of whom the presiding judge was generally a non-resident of the city.[4] This is another illustration of the idea which the Italians of that age so often acted upon, namely, that a non-resident would, in the nature of things, be more impartial than a fellow-citizen. Before this tribunal a great variety of cases was brought, including even such as arose among Florentines outside of the national domain; and from its decisions there seems to have been no appeal, except in very extraordinary cases. This body is said to have combined the functions both of a court of justice and of a modern chamber of commerce, and to have had its own special code of laws, known as the "Statute of '96."[1] It possessed also the ultimate power of regulating disputes between partners and of fixing the amount due the heirs of a deceased partner.[2] Arbitration was also in vogue, and seems to have been a not uncommon method of settling commercial disputes.[3]

---

[1] Ademollo, I, 179.
[2] *Ib.*, II, 425.
[3] Cavalcanti, 464–466.
[4] Guicciardini, *Reggimento*, 36, note 1.

International trade was then by no means as free as it is now; but its spirit has not changed in the intervening centuries; for the same policy continues to be pursued, each nation trying to obtain an advantage over its rival, in the country of a friendly power. The special treaties of commerce between France and Greece, for example, and between Germany and Austria, and our own policy of reciprocity, all find their counterparts in the commercial treaties of Florence at this early period.

Already in the year 1296 there is mention of a society of Florentine merchants at Nîmes, in southern France; there was one in Paris in 1325, and one in Montpelier in 1382; this last having the special object of keeping open the connection with Bruges in Flanders. During the fourteenth century the foreign trade of the city grew immensely, especially toward the north and west. Besides the business houses established in foreign cities, there were three hundred or more men sent out yearly direct from Florence, to carry their trade into foreign parts.[4] The Peruzzi alone had at this time sixteen branches of their banking house, extending from London to Cyprus; and Florentine traders penetrated into Asia Minor, Armenia, the Crimea, and far into the heart of Asia, even to northern China.[5]

The importance of international commerce, not only in the economy of the world, but also as an element in the progress of civilization, can scarcely be overestimated. It is the first and strongest factor in bringing peoples together, who otherwise would be ignorant of each others' good qualities, and would probably regard each the other as barbarian. The knowledge of another's productive activity often turns contempt into respect; and furthermore, the desire of securing the products of such activity has tended strongly to the propagation of peace principles. For mankind is finally recognizing the fact that war destroys much more than even conquest gains. Hence we believe that the commercial spirit has probably been as effective in bringing about almost universal peace as even the beautiful teachings of Christ himself.

---

[1] Perrens, II, 137.

[2] Mazzei, II, 42, note 2.

[3] *Ib.*, II, 74, n. 3.

[4] Capponi, I, 251.

[5] Reumont, I, 94–95. Yriarte attributes these branch banks to the Medici, but is probably in error.

In 1421 the Florentines commenced preparations for active trade with the Orient, being incited thereto by the wealth which Venice had gained in the Levant. For this trade two large galleys and six guard ships were built, at the then newly-acquired port of Leghorn; and six new officers, called Maritime Consuls, were created whose duty it was to oversee this trade. One year later the movement was inaugurated by a procession and religious services; and the Florentines started on a new venture which proved as successful as any they ever tried.[1] They gained the privilege of erecting a commercial house and a church at Alexandria, conciliating the sultan by presents of great value. The Medici were deeply interested in the scheme, which afterward proved a great source of wealth to them. By the middle of the century, the general trade had so increased that in one year Florence sent out to England, Barbary, and Constantinople, ten well laden ships.[2] Later they aroused the envy of their rivals, because of their prosperity; and toward the end of the century we find the French complaining that "they were eating up the kingdom by usury.[3]" Such is the common experience of men; the success of one causes the envy and hatred of those less fortunate in the race for wealth; and intercourse begun with pleasure ends in disruption and perhaps war.

---

[1] Roscoe, 116–117.

[2] Perrens, I, 192.

[3] *Ib.*, II, 37, quoting a contemporaneous letter.

It must be borne in mind that the Florence of the Renaissance included not only the city proper but also all the territory subject to it; and a large proportion of the wealth was produced then as now by agriculture. The relation of master and peasant was peculiar, almost socialistic; and a similar condition still exists in the Tuscan mountains. The proprietor of a large estate has it more or less subdivided into a number of farms, on each of which lives a peasant family which cultivates the land for the lord. The owner directs the kind of crop to be raised and the general method of cultivation, while the peasant provides the labor, the draft animals, and so on. When the harvest is gathered, the proprietor and peasant share half and half, the year's products. At least that is the theory; but it is often said of the peasants that they divide the harvest into three parts, of which they appropriate one in secret. Thus the system which was in vogue centuries ago, still regulates the agriculture of the district, and makes a community of interest between landlord and peasant which is rare if not unique in western Europe. The Tuscan peasant of the Renaissance was largely engaged in breeding cattle, horses, and tame buffaloes, sheep and goats. Most of the grain for Florence was imported; but the peasants cultivated buckwheat, panic grass, beans, vetch, flax, hemp, madder, and saffron. They gathered the nuts of the chestnut and other forest trees, which were extensively used for food; and through the example of the Strozzi family, they began to cultivate the artichoke and fig.

The conditions of city life were then as now very different; and the thousands of laborers crowded into the city were as unthrifty and discontented as the working men of to-day. Mazzei[1] speaks of "the poor who are few and the bad who will not work and are many." To this may be added the testimony of Landucci who, writing in the winter of 1478–9, says:—"The citizens are much impoverished, and there are none who want to work."[1] The district between the city gates of San Friano and Romana was then occupied mainly by the working classes, as it still is; and was then probably even more filthy than now; for the new government has made immense progress in the matter of sanitary cleanliness. Whether strikes in the modern form were then known, we are not informed; but we do know that the men forced up their wages from time to time; and that the increase of salary thus gained did not serve to ameliorate their condition, but was employed to indulge their lower tastes; and thus served to make their last state worse than the first.[2] This is not the place for a discussion of one of the most important economic questions of our day; but the lesson offered by the history of one of the great manufacturing centres of the Renaissance, should not be lost upon us.

---

[1] II, 143.

As one of the native historians remarks, the city was in truth founded on commerce.[3] Under such circumstances it was but natural that riches should accumulate; and where riches are, there will corruption be also. Another of their historians, who wrote in the debtors' prison, says: "As no stream ever rises with clear water, so none of those who grow rich do so by lawful or honest gain."[4] It is however not well for the historian to go to extremes or make sweeping judgments. The early record of the Medici family and of others shows a high degree of honor and honesty; while that of their later doings, after the founders of their wealth had long lain in their graves, is indeed far from clean. What constituted wealth at that time, may be seen from the amount of the inheritance of the Medici, as well as by the sums they gave away in charities and buildings for the public; also by the amounts loaned by the leading banking houses. Giovanni, the father of Cosimo de' Medici, died in 1428, and left 179,221 gold florins; Cosimo left 235,137; Piero his son, and father of the great Lorenzo, left 237,982 florins.[1] In the meantime the family had devoted to public uses an immense property, of which Cosimo alone is said to have contributed from 400,000 to 500,000 gold florins. How great the wealth of the Florentines really was may be inferred from the number and magnificence of the private palaces which they erected, in which they displayed an activity and ambition which has rarely if ever been equalled.

---

[1] p. 30.

[2] See Thomas, *Révolutions de Florence*, 147.

[3] Varchi, II, 126.

[4] Cavalcanti, II, 189.

From the latter part of the twelfth century the Florentines coined their own money, at first in silver, then later in gold and copper also. The gold florin, which became famous throughout the then commercial world, was first made in the year 1252; at which time the city was in an especially flourishing condition. According to Villani[2] it was of pure gold, and weighed one-eighth of an ounce. On one side was the lily, which was the coat-of-arms of the city; and on the reverse was the image of St. John the Baptist, the city's patron saint. Thus far the matter is simple; but the confusion of the monetary system of Florence as the years and centuries pass, appears to be absolutely inexplicable. The first florins were coined by order of the municipality; but coinage was free, at least for other states; and numbers of them coined imitations of the florin. Consequently they were not all of equal value; and it was customary for the merchants to carry them to the officers of the mint to have them tested and weighed. The Florentine ounce contained 576 grains, while the Troy ounce, which is our standard, contains but 480 grains. The American dollar contains about 23.2 grains of pure gold.[3] The gold florin of Florence, containing 72 grains, was accordingly worth, comparing by weight, about $3.10. This does not agree with the statement of Burckhardt, who values it at from nine to ten marks, or from $2.25 to $2.50.[4] In 1256 the Florentines besieging Pisa, and having been victorious, cut down a large tree, and coined some florins on the stump. This fact they immortalized by placing a trefoil at the feet of the figure of St. John.[1] There was also the silver florin; but what was its weight, or its relative value when compared to the gold florin, I have been unable to ascertain. Each coin was equal to twenty soldi; but the soldi into which the gold coin was divided must have been of much greater value than the soldi of the silver coin. Another money value frequently mentioned is the lira, which name is now employed for the unit of money value throughout Italy, which is equal to the French franc. Etymologically the word is the same as libra, pound; the one being the unit of money as the other is of weight.[2] But there seems to be no evidence that it was ever used to signify a pound of silver. The lira also equals twenty soldi. A few citations from the old authors will show, however, that either its value must have been extremely variable, or else that of the gold coins was so. Thus in the year 1331, Villani remarks that the heaping bushel of grain cost "eight little soldi, the gold florin being at three lira."[3] Six years later he states that the same measure of grain cost "eight soldi, of which sixty-two made a gold florin."[4] A note to Cavalcanti, I, 255, says that in the year 1415 the florin was worth seventy-three soldi and four danari. In Landucci's Diary,[5] there is a summary of his wife's belongings, with the money values of most of the objects. For some of them he gives the value both in gold florins and in lire and subsidiary coin. An examination of the details here found reveal the fact that he also calculated the value of the florin in different ways; for by a comparison of his equivalents we find that the florin might have at least five different valuations, varying from four lire, ten soldi, to five lire, sixteen soldi. Fanfani, in his Vocabolario of 1888, states the then value of the gold florin to be equal to eighty silver florins, and that the silver florin is equivalent to one lira, forty centesimi; so that the present gold florin is equal to eighty times one lira, forty, or something more than twenty dollars. In other words, it is about equal to our double eagle. With such a variety of interpretations of the word florin or fiorino, it is simply impossible to affirm with certainty the equivalents of sums mentioned as the prices of various objects. Varchi[1] informs us that a gold florin, a ducat, and a scudo were all equivalent, and were each equal to seven lire; but he says also that one lira equalled twenty soldi. As a florin did not represent more than twenty soldi, and a lira also valued twenty soldi, how could a florin be worth seven lire! In the year 1337 Villani records that a new money was made, containing twenty-five per cent more alloy that the old coinage, and was called scudo;[2] while Varchi, writing in the first half of the sixteenth century, mentions the fact that the scudo was made of less refined gold than the florin, being but twenty-two carats fine, while the florin was coined of gold which was more than twenty-three and seven-eighths carats fine.[3] About the year 1421, Florence coming into sharp competition with Venice in Alexandria, saw fit to reduce its florin to the weight of the Venetian coin, and called the new coin fiorino largo di galea.[4]

---

[1] Burckhardt, I, 141.

[2] II, 134–135.

[3] Webster, Dict.

[4] I, 139–140.

---

[1] Ammirato, 83.

[2] Zambaldi, *Vocabolario etimologico italiano.*

[3] VI, 266.

[4] VII, 153.

[5] pp. 6–8.

Zecchino is another word sometimes met with in old records, which is generally interpreted as being about the equivalent of the original florin. A modern authority states that it contained seventy-one grains of gold,[5] which is very near the seventy-two grains of the antique florin. Writing about the middle of this century, he values it at 14 lire, 5 soldi, and 4 danari; while Fanfani, 1888, gives its value at 12 Italian lire. The modern soldo equals five centesimi, and is almost equivalent to our cent. The term is still constantly used by the Italians, though officially the government does not coin soldi, that coin having been one of the pope's before the taking of Rome by Victor Emmanuel. But the original soldo was one-twentieth of the gold florin, and hence was worth one-twentieth of, say $3.10, or 15½ cents. Between these extremes it would probably be possible to find very many so-called values of the name. Certain it is, no fixed value can be given, which would be correct for the various periods of Florentine history. Villani in relating the circumstances of the first coinage of gold in Florence, tells us that "previously they coined money of silver, of twelve danari each."[1] From Varchi,[2] we learn that the soldo was also equivalent to twelve danari. In the National Museum of Florence there are silver coins of the city dating from the year 1182. Is it not possible that these coins were called soldi before the introduction of gold, and that they were later called sometimes silver florins, sometimes lire? In view of all the facts, this appears to us plausible, and at least a partial explanation of the confusion in which the subject is involved. In 1325 the design of the subsidiary coin was altered, on account of the amount of counterfeit coin which was abroad.[3] This may account for other variations of names; for as we know by another passage from the same author,[4] the Florentines changed the name of the coin for each alteration in its appearance, no matter how slight.

---

[1] II, 121–122.

[2] VII, 159.

[3] III, Lib. xvi, p. 60.

[4] Capponi, II, 142.

[5] Fraticelli, *Aritmetica*, 343.

The first gold florin is said to have been made by a man named Laberto Antellesi or dell' Antella.[5] They were all made by hand, and the edges were unfinished like the coins of antiquity. Besides the characteristic figures of St. John and the lily, the coins often bear the coat of arms of a Florentine family, perhaps of those banking houses to which the coin was first issued. As early as 1427 a silver coin bears the Medicean shield with the characteristic six balls. How the gold florin was regarded in the early days may be inferred from the anecdote connected with the introduction of Florentine trade into Tunis. When the Florentines were seeking to gain the privileges of trade there, the Pisans, already in possession, opposed their efforts, and told the king that the Florentines were the "Arabs" of the Pisans. But some of the gold florins having been placed in his hands, and pleasing him greatly, he commanded that the people who made such money should be given the privileges of trade in his realm, with the right of erecting a business house and church.[1]

---

[1] II, 134.
[2] II, 121.
[3] Villani, V, 265.
[4] VII, 159–160.
[5] Ademollo, I, 281.

In 1322 Pope John XXII, the first pope who resided at Avignon, commenced making gold coins of the same weight and alloy as the florins, but with his own name on the reverse, to the dissatisfaction of the Florentines.[2] Two years later the same pope issued a proclamation threatening excommunication against any who should counterfeit the gold coin of Florence; "but in this matter, he did not correct himself," adds the ancient chronicler.[3] Unfortunately even the Florentine government did not always retain its own high standard; for several times we find complaints of the governmental policy in reducing the quality of the coin, as in 1316, 1347, and again in 1490, when the national affairs were more or less in disorder. However, one of the native authors attributes the changes in coinage as in other things to the "ordinary diversions" of the Florentines.[4] But on the whole Florence may well be proud of the high position she occupied for a long period in the world of commerce and finance. And this position was due in no little measure to the excellent character of her coinage. Gold was then much more rare than at present, and so these coins had much greater purchasing power. It is believed that gold lost one-half of its purchasing power between 1400 and 1580;[5] and half of the remaining half, between that date and 1845;[6] since which time there has been still further diminution in its purchasing power. Hence we may calculate that at present it is not more than one-fifth of what it was at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Other calculations are still more extreme. For instance, in the life of Sir Thomas More, we are told that in the beginning of the sixteenth century his legal practice brought him about four hundred pounds per annum; which was "equal to £4,000 in present money, and, 'considering the relative profits of the law and the value of money, probably indicated as high a station as £10,000 at the present day.'"[1]

---

[1] Villani, II, 135–136.

[2] *Ib.*, V, 167.

[3] *Ib.*, V, 257.

[4] Ammirato, 368.

[5] Burckhardt, I, 140.

[6] Ademollo, I, 56.

Recognizing the uncertainty in the values to be attributed to the various sums mentioned, and presuming that the silver florin is intended where gold is not expressly stated, which seems to have been customary, let us examine some of the prices in Florence. Then as now the price of wheat appears to have been taken as indicative of the general condition of the market. In 1282, when provisions were "at the dearest," the stroke bushel cost 14 soldi, of 33 soldi to the gold florin.[2] Four years later the same measure is quoted at 18 soldi, of 35 to the gold florin.[3] Business was "never worse" than in 1310, when the bushel cost one-half gold florin, and that though it was "all mixed with buckwheat."[4] In 1322 cold and scarcity caused two and a half bushels to be valued at one gold florin.[5] The harvests of the years 1328 and 1329 were very bad, so that the price of wheat rose in a few days from 17 to 38 soldi, and later reached 42. The government in this extremity imported wheat from Sicily and elsewhere, and sold it at Orsanmichele at a half florin per bushel, mixed with one-fourth barley. The would-be purchasers were so numerous and so disorderly, that it was considered necessary to have present the officers and troops of the signoria, "to do justice." They were armed with block and axe, "and had the limbs of some cut off." During these two years the government spent thus for the sustenance of the people more than sixty thousand gold florins; also baking bread in six ounce loaves, and selling it at four danari per loaf. And to those who could not afford to buy for themselves, the government gave every day eight to twelve danari. While Florence was thus supporting its poor, other communities, as Perugia, Siena, and Lucca, drove out their poor, to starve, die, or beg elsewhere.[1] The year 1337 was one of great abundance, and wheat sold at 8 soldi of 62 soldi to the gold florin; which Villani considered "disorderly vileness," or dreadful dearness, considering the plenty.[2] After only three years, there was again great scarcity, combined with unusual mortality, and consequent increase in price; so that wheat brought 30 soldi per bushel, and would have been dearer if the government had not kept the price down by special imports.[3]

---

[1] Campbell. Mark Pattison, in *Encyc. Brit.*

[2] Villani, III, 159.

[3] *Ib.*, 999, 191.

[4] *Ib.*, V, 13, 14.

[5] *Ib.*, V, 180.

Passing over a century and a half of Florentine history, we find Landucci in his Diary noting from time to time the price of wheat, from which we take the following: "Besides the other tribulations" of January, 1484, wheat cost 50 soldi per bushel. By March the price had risen to 59. The arrival of some ships at Pisa and Leghorn laden with grain, brought the price down again to 50; and the government sold it at 42. By June it had declined to 33; and in April of 1485, it was selling at 16 soldi. By August, 1496, it was again dear, selling at more than 40 soldi; but the worst had not yet come. October 8th, it was at 50; and on the 30th of the month, it was selling at from 58 to 60. The price on January 25th, 1497, was 74 soldi; on the 28th, 54 soldi; and by the 11th of February, it had risen to 80 soldi. The mob had sacked the Piazza del Grano on the 19th of January; but had not thereby improved matters. For by the beginning of April the price was 90 soldi, and increased to the unheard-of price of 5 lire or 100 soldi, on the twelfth of the same month. May

---

[1] *Ib.*, VI, 170–171.

[2] *Ib.*, VII, 153.

[3] *Ib.*, VII, 233.

6th, it was down to 60 soldi, but increased to 95 by the 13th of the month, and on the 31st, wheat was again selling at 100. Here Landucci indulges in a little self-praise, which under the circumstances is excusable. Though the price was 5 lire or 100 soldi, he sold his wheat at 4 lire 16 soldi, or 96 soldi, notwithstanding the fact that he might have had more than five lire for it, though he did not have but a little to sell.[1] In May 1499, something like the normal condition of affairs seems to have been restored, and wheat was selling at from 15 to 16 soldi the bushel. Thus we see that markets were much the same then as now, with prices rising and falling according to circumstances, even though trade was not in the hands of wicked trusts and bloated corporations. The truth is that with the modern facility of transport, and the custom of trading in "futures," the daily variation of price in staples is not nearly so great as it was in Florence during the Renaissance. Burckhardt tells us that in regard to Lombardy, the relative prices of wheat in the middle of the fifteenth century and the middle of the present century, were about as three to eight.[2] If however the purchasing power of gold be taken into consideration, it is safe to assert that a bushel of wheat does not represent so much labor now as in those days; and that it is therefore in reality, cheaper now than then.

The unit of weight in Florence was the *libra* or pound, which was almost exactly three-fourths of our pound (.7497). For liquid measure, the unit seems to have been the *fiasco*, which is still usual, although the litre has become the official unit. It contains about two and a half litres; but as they do not seem to be exact in quantity, the wine is frequently sold by weight. Wine in quantities was generally sold by the barrel, which was possibly the same as the present barrel of 45½ litres; as in such matters the Florentines are very conservative. Two barrels were called a *somma*, or burden, as they balanced each other on either side of a pack animal.

---

[1] p. 152.

[2] I, 140.

Ten barrels formed a *cogno*, which appears to have been the largest measure for liquids. The *braccio* was the unit of measure of length, and was equal to .5835 of a metre, or 22.97 inches. For long distances, the *miglio* or mile was used, which was equivalent to 1.653 chilometres, or 1.027 American miles.

The business activity of this little community was doubtless very great, as it exercised so much influence on the contemporary world; but unfortunately we have no proper measure for it. With the aid of steam and electricity, it is now possible for one man's work to take the place of a score of men's work under former conditions; and the uncertain difference in the purchasing power of gold renders the problem still more difficult. When ten barrels of wine for the priors could be bought for 30 florins, presumably in silver, what must have been the prices of other products?[1] Indeed a whole vineyard was bought for 60 florins.[2]

These instances are given in order that we might have some standard by which to judge the entire amount of business done in the city. For a manuscript of the fifteenth century is preserved, which contains an estimate, carried out in detail, of the amount which a tax of ten per cent on all business and property would produce. From this we gather that the trade of the seven major guilds and the salaries of their agents amounted to 500,000 florins (gold?) yearly;[3] that of the fourteen minor guilds to 250,000 florins; that of unenumerated trades and of the territory, to about 400,000 florins. The rents of all the houses and shops of the city is estimated at 50,000 florins.[4]

These figures appear so small that we can by their means form no judgment as to the relative or absolute business of the city at that time; yet even these are regarded as too high by Roscoe. A surer basis of judgment is found in the magnificent structures both public and private which the profits of this business enabled the citizens to erect, the superb works of art they caused to be created, and the influence they exerted throughout the then commercial world. Judged by these standards, the greatness of Florence and of her commerce and industry are indisputable.

---

[1] Mazzei, I, 395.

[2] *Ib.*, I, 158.

[3] This is very far from agreeing with Burckhardt's statement (I, 77) that the exchange offices alone did a business of two million gold florins annually.

[4] MS. given in Roscòe, 429–430.

VIII.

CHARITY, PUBLIC WORKS, AND TAXATION.

In our American civilization, with its universal race for wealth, its undervaluing of human life, and its large measure of crime and corruption, it is, notwithstanding all these drawbacks to national self-satisfaction, a great consolation to find almost unbounded charity, and private as well as public endowments of untold value, for the promotion of the public welfare. This condition of affairs is made possible by the accumulation of great wealth, and becomes a reality by the application of the tenets of Christianity, understood in their highest and best sense. Fanaticism may lead men to give of their means for the promotion of a cause dear to them, but will never guide them in the ways of general charity or universal love. Culture alone, on the other hand, is too apt to let men seek their own ease and comfort. But the union of a broad-minded religiousness with proper knowledge to show men how best to bestow their charity, will be productive of the highest benefit to humanity. Such a condition of affairs, it is hoped, we are approaching in America; and something akin to it existed in the Florence of the Renaissance. Enthusiasm for learning raised the Florentines out of the slough of mediæval fanaticism, while they still remained religious; and their culture enabled them to apply their generous donations in a way which did credit to their love for humanity, for their native city, and for the unfortunate among their fellow-citizens. As a self-governing political body, they voted large sums of money for religious and eleemosynary purposes; as individuals, they bestowed their goods on the poor; and as members of corporations and volunteer associations, they united in providing for the embellishment of their city, and the care of the sick, the injured, and the dead. This intense public-spiritedness, it was, as much as any other characteristic of the city, which enabled Florence to occupy the important position which it did in the general affairs of Italy.

That a distinction was drawn between the Church and religion, was shown as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Francesco Datini bequeathed his property to establish a "house of the poor," with the express proviso that there should be no altars erected in it, and that no ecclesiastic authority whatever should have sway there;[1] thus setting an example afterwards adopted by the celebrated Stephen Girard, the philanthropist of Philadelphia, who founded a magnificent school for orphan boys into which no priest or preacher is permitted even to enter. Yet Datini was religious, and in no wise tainted with heresy, as his correspondence with Mazzei abundantly proves.

More frequently, however, the legacies were left in trust to religious bodies, even when intended for non-sectarian uses. About the same time another Florentine, Bartolommeo Bandini, leaves his entire property "to clothe poor men and marry girls," that is, give them dowries.[2] Still another citizen provided by last will and testament that to every poor person in the city there should be given six danari. In order to prevent the same person from being counted and receiving this sum twice, the executors of the will hit upon the plan of inviting all the poor to assemble in their respective parish churches at the same time. After all were come, the doors were closed for a short time, then those present allowed to leave, each receiving the allotted sum as he passed the door. The number who thus received the benefit of the bequest was about 18,000 persons of all ages. But these did not include the "poveri vergognosi" or shamed poor, or those in the hospitals and prisons, or the religious mendicants. These also, to the number of about 4,000 received each the six danari.[1] Thus we see that in this city of about 90,000 inhabitants, reputed so rich, there were 22,000 persons willing to receive charity to the smallest amount. However, the historian adds, the poor came from all parts of Tuscany, and even from points further distant, for the alms of Florence. The two-thirds of a million of gold florins which the Medici gave away during the forty years of their currying favor with the Florentines, have been spoken of time and again by historians and biographers; but the constant and quiet alms-giving of a certain Giovanni de' Medici, who died in 1429, without trying to rule the city by bribery and flattery, is not so well known. Of him it is related that he secretly gave to many girls the dowries which enabled them to marry, that he clothed many poor men, and that no one who asked alms of him, was ever sent away empty-handed.[2] In 1436 the fortunes of war drove the women and children of Casentino in hordes to Florence; so that the whole city had an opportunity to show its charitable spirit; and it did so right royally; for these poor outcasts of fortune were taken in, housed and fed, in the most liberal manner; and were later permanently provided with homes in the territory of Pisa.[3]

---

[1] Mazzei, I, cxv.

[2] *Ibid.*, 149, note 3.

Of all the forms of charity, none are perhaps more worthy of support or more necessary, than those which make provision for the sick and helpless. This principle is now generally if not universally recognized in Christian lands; but the idea was of late development in the history of mankind. Already in the year 1293, the rulers of Florence re-acquired the hospital of San Sebio, which had fallen a prey to some of her rapacious grandi.[4] This fact shows that even earlier than that date, the community had erected a public hospital. In reference to the history of the foundation, however, I have seen no further statement. Of the various hospitals which yet remain in existence in the city, that of SANTA MARIA NUOVA is the oldest. It was founded about the year 1285 by Folco Portinari, the father of Dante's Beatrice; and was opened for patients June 23d, 1288, with seventeen beds. Another building was soon afterward erected in the neighborhood for the accommodation of nuns who wished to devote their lives to the care of the sick. These were called Oblate (serving nuns) di Santa Maria Nuova.[1] As early as 1329 by-laws for its governance were in existence, according to which the director of the hospital must be in orders, but was not allowed to profit by any ecclesiastical position. Furthermore, if he possessed any property, he must give it to the hospital before entering on the duties of the office. The same rule applied to the monks and nuns who attended the patients; but marriage among them might be permitted. If any property were left to the hospital, it must be sold within two years, or its administration given into the hands of the Company of Orsanmichele.[2] This hospital received from time to time so many bequests, that Varchi was of the opinion that it would have been in possession of the larger part of all the estates of Florence, if it had not sold them, for the needs of the institution. In his day its yearly expenses amounted to 25,000 scudi, of which 18,000 were fixed income from its estates, and 7,000 from other sources, including the contributions of the public.[3] During the ravages of the pest, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the legacies to this hospital alone amounted to more than 25,000 gold florins.[4]

---

[1] Villani, VI, 230–231.

[2] Cavalcanti, I, 266.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 121.

[4] Ammirato, 144.

A hospital called the SCALA was founded in 1306 by a cobbler named Cione Pollini, and continued its usefulness until suppressed in 1531. It was situated in the street which still bears the name derived from the hospital.[5] A new hospital, called ORBETELLO, was founded in 1377 by Niccolò degli Alberti, for aged poor women, and as a lying-in hospital for the victims of seduction.[1] Toward the end of the century, Lemmo da Montecatini commenced building a hospital for the administration of which in the future he made provision in his will dated May 24th, 1389. This hospital was called at first San Niccolò; but the name was afterward changed to SAN MATTEO, and the hospital continued in existence until 1784, when the grand duke took possession of its building for the Academy of Fine Arts.[2] The present entrance of the Academy and the rooms immediately to the right and left, are in reality the old external portico, altered for new uses; the part occupied by the statuary was the hospital for men; that now used for the oldest pictures, was the female apartment.[3] The hospital of San Matteo still continues its usefulness, though in other quarters which are near the Santa Maria Nuova. The letters of Mazzei, which we so frequently quote, show him to have been intimately connected with the administration of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova; and also that his business as notary brought him in contact with people who had in mind to contribute of their substance to some charity. Thus in 1395 he writes his friend that one of the citizens was desirous of buying a farm for the hospital with which he was connected.[4] In another letter he says that there are many merchants who, after their yearly accounts are made up, come to him to inquire as to the most worthy charities, as they give away yearly a certain portion of their profits.[5] The officers of the hospital have about fifty estates to administer, out of the rents of which they are required to provide money, dresses, and dowries, according to the wishes of the testators.[6] As to the capacity of this hospital, Mazzei speaks of its having at one time 250 sick; and as this was during the pest, we may consider that number as its limit.[1]

---

[1] Ademollo, II, 574–575.

[2] Mazzei, I, lxxv.

[3] Varchi, II, 109.

[4] Ammirato, 373.

[5] Landini, *Misericordia*, 23, n. 1.

---

[1] Ademollo, *Maria dei Ricci*, II, 419.

[2] Mazzei, I, 119, note 1.

[3] Ademollo, II, 541.

[4] I, 105-106.

[5] I, 39.

[6] *Ibid.*

One of the best-known buildings of Florence is the SPEDALE DEGLI INNOCENTI, or foundling hospital, with its fine portico adorned with panels containing the graceful *bambini* or children in swaddling clothes, the work of Andrea della Robbia. The history of this hospital dates from the year 1421, when the signoria was led to make provision for its erection by a stirring speech of the great scholar Leonardo Aretino. The supervision of the building was placed in the hands of the consuls of the silk guild; and the designs were prepared by the great Brunelleschi. The building was ready for occupancy in 1444, since which time it has continued its work of mercy without ceasing.[2]

Villani[3] states that in the year 1338, there were thirty hospitals in the city, with more than a thousand beds for the accommodation of the poor and infirm. To the next century belongs San Paolo, founded in 1451, whose portico is still a chief ornament of the piazza di Santa Maria Novella. There was also one for incurables; others were for the sick of the various guilds, which paid for their erection and maintenance. Then too there were other institutions which they called hospitals, but which were in reality places of temporary succor for the homeless who were out of work, and for travellers who were too poor to go to a hotel. Here they might be given shelter for one or two nights, and were sometimes, though not always, provided with food gratis. Institutions of this kind were established near almost all the city gates, and no doubt found plenty of opportunity for usefulness, although complaint is made of the manner of their administration.[4]

---

[1] I, 244.

[2] England's first foundling hospital was not commenced until 1739, and received no governmental support until 1756, more than three centuries and a quarter after Florence had established one.

[3] VII, 203.

[4] Varchi, II, 109-111.

The value placed upon the possession of Florentine citizenship is well illustrated by the case of Bonifazio Lupi, Marquis of Soragna, who was first engaged by the Florentines as military leader against Pisa, and later was presented with the citizenship of the city. This was in 1369; and in 1377 he commenced the building of a hospital which was opened eleven years later. It cost him 25,000 florins, and for the maintenance thereof he provided a permanent income of 700 florins per annum. Though he dedicated the hospital to San Giovanni, it was later known by the Christian name of its founder, Bonifazio; and it was enlarged and endowed anew by the Grand-Duke Peter Leopold. Its administration was confided to the guild of Calimala.[1]

With all the care and attention given to the sick, the Florentines of the Renaissance did not arrive at the idea of humane treatment of the insane. This was illustrated by the banishment of the poor crazy woman on the return of Cosimo de' Medici, in 1434; and it is perhaps still better shown by the fact that throughout the fifteenth century, the insane were confined in the loathsome quarters of the debtor prison.[2]

Some idea of the number of charitable institutions in the city at an early period, and of the liberality of a private, and otherwise unknown citizen, may be gained from the last will and testament of Francesco da Mantoa in 1400. He leaves to the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, "for marrying girls and maintaining children," 600 florins; to the hospital of San Giovambattista, 200 florins; to the hospital of San Gallo, 200 florins; to the company of Bigallo, for distributing to the occupants of the debtor prison, eight bushels of bread per month, during twenty years, 400 florins; to provide a tunic of coarse cloth for each of five hundred poor of the city and environs, 800 florins; to Santa Croce, 200 florins; to Santa Maria Novella, 100 florins; to the Bigallo, 100 florins; to the Frati de' Servi, 200 florins; to the "Opera delle mura"

---

[1] Ademollo, II, 541–542.

[2] Cavalcanti, II, 496–498.

(work on the city walls), 2 florins, and to the work on the cathedral, 10 florins.[1]

The ravages of the pest in 1348 disposed the wealthy to charity in a large degree; and among the numerous legacies of that year, there were 350,000 florins left to the Captains of the Company of Orsanmichele, for distribution among the poor. But so much was bequeathed to the poor, and so many of the poor, as well as the rich, died, that there were finally no worthy beneficiaries left. Accordingly the cupidity of human nature developed under temptation, and the money which had been destined for the support of the poor, was being transferred to the coffers of the administrators; until the scandal became so notorious, that the government confiscated a portion of the fund to public use.[2] During this same year of pestilence and death, there was left to the company of MISERICORDIA the sum of 35,000 florins. This company has remained in active existence to the present, and has relieved uncounted cases of suffering, and performed the last offices for innumerable dead. The history of this society is so intimately interwoven with that of the city, for more than six centuries, that it deserves especial notice. About the year 1240, business was very active in Florence, and many porters were employed in carrying the goods from one place to another. When not at work, they were generally congregated on the open place between the cathedral and San Giovanni; and in bad weather they made use of an open cellar near by. Here they were accustomed to play games and use vile language, to the great displeasure of a certain Piero Borsi, of pious proclivities, who proposed to them that they provide a box in which, for every offense against good morals, the offender should deposit one crazia.

After some money had been collected in this manner, Luca proposed to have made six stretchers, one for each ward of the city; and that the porters organize themselves into groups, one for each ward; and that they serve alternately in turns of one week, in the transport of the sick and injured. He suggested that those serving should draw from the box a certain amount for each trip; but was overruled by the others, who decided to give their services free. After Luca's death, another member originated the idea of placing a box near San Giovanni, on the Day of Pardon, with a picture of the dead Christ, and the legend, "Give alms for the poor and needy sick of the city." The contributions of that one day more than filled the box, and amounted to about 500 florins, which enabled the society to provide itself with respectable quarters above the cellar in which it had had its origin. The company gradually became of such importance as to attract the attention of the city authorities, who brought it under public supervision; and early in the fifteenth century, united its administration with that of another charitable company named del Bigallo.

---

[1] Mazzei, I, 253, note.

[2] Ammirato, 373.

Soon after the organization of the society, the members while on duty, wore a garment and hood of red stuff; and the stretchers on which the sick and dead were carried, together with the linen covering, were also at first red; but all this was later changed for the more appropriate black. The usefulness of this institution was so apparent that the idea was taken up by other Italian cities, many of which now possess their Misericordia societies, modeled after the Florentine original.[1]

Among the many good works of the humble archbishop Antonino, none was more original, or perhaps more useful, than that of the *Congregatione di San Martino*, which he organized to relieve the misery of those unfortunates who, whether by the banishment of the male members of the family, or by some other untoward occurrence, were deprived of their property, but were nevertheless too reserved to make their wants and conditions known to the public. Such persons were called "*poveri vergognosi*," or those who were ashamed of their poverty. Owing to the political conditions and revolutions of the city, there were many such; and it required a man like the good Antonino, with his keen eye for distress and his warm, sympathizing heart, to find them out, and institute a method of relief which should not defeat its purpose by exposing the recipients of the charity to public gaze. Every month, such sums of money as could be procured were distributed among them.[1] He positively forbade the accumulation of property in the hands of the company, and commanded that even real estate which might be given to it, should be sold in the shortest practicable time, and the proceeds applied directly to charity. After four centuries of existence, the company continues to flourish, and has never wanted means for the pursuit of its pious work.[2]

---

[1] See Placido Landini, *Istoria della venerabile arciconfraternità di Santa Maria della Misericordia*, Firenze, 1843.

Criminals condemned to death seem to have been treated with great harshness in the early days of the republic, and probably to have gone to their last account without the ministration of the rites of the Church, which were so dear to them. In 1361 the city authorities were induced to give in trust to twelve young men a piece of land outside the Gate of Justice, through which gate the condemned went to execution on the piazza di Santa Croce. On this ground they caused to be erected a chapel, where the condemned might hear mass before ascending the scaffold, and in the shadow of which their bodies might receive decent burial. The number of those engaged in this charity was later augmented to twenty-four, when they assumed the name of *Compagnia dei Neri*, or Company of the Blacks, from the black costume and masks which they ever afterwards wore during their services with the condemned. In 1442 their number was again increased, this time to fifty; whose names were drawn by lot from a list of the members of a larger association called the Company of the Virgin Mary of the Cross.[3]

---

[1] Varchi, II, 129.

[2] Capponi, II, 324–325.

[3] Ademollo, II, 570.

One of the most usual forms of charity was the giving of money for the dowry of young girls to enable them to marry. These bequests varied from fifty florins of one, Cambioni, to the thousands of florins given by wealthier citizens; and the funds were not unfrequently left to the administration of hospitals. Not only was a great deal of charity exercised toward women; but in Florence as elsewhere we find the women especially active in charitable works.[1]

The liberality of the Florentines was not by any means confined to the giving of alms and the founding of hospitals; for though they were broad-minded in religious matters, from the dogmatic point of view, they loved the church and delighted to do her honor. The city possesses magnificent edifices for public worship, which were founded by the city at large, as a part of the public duty toward God and the community; and many of the most beautiful chapels of these same churches are the gifts of private individuals. The Florentines were and are exceedingly impressionable, and quick to turn an idea into action. Thus in 1292 miracles were attributed to the *Madonna of Orsanmichele;* and, in consequence of their gratitude, many people made presents and legacies, not only to her but also to the poor, these last amounting to more than six thousand lire.[2] The same year, the guild of Calimala undertook the alteration and improvement of the temple of the city's patron saint, *San Giovanni;* and it is in consequence of the guild's liberality that the interior of that edifice is so beautiful. They had the old columns of brick removed, and their place supplied with the beautiful oriental columns of marble, which are the admiration of visitors to-day. They removed also the monuments and tombs, with which the building and grounds were encumbered, and brought the whole into a state of elegant simplicity.[3]

The strength of the religious feeling and at the same tim the greatness of ideas among the city fathers cannot be bett illustrated than by the fact that they began in one and the same year two such magnificent and stupendous works as the cathedral and the church of Santa Croce, where rest the remains of the city's most honored dead. The next undertaking on a large scale, combining the erection of a useful structure with the adornment of the city, was the present building of *Orsanmichele,* which was intended for an open mart or loggia on the ground floor, and for a store-house of grain and for offices in the upper portions.[1] Instead of being an eyesore, as our modern grain elevators are, this grain market and storage house was and still remains after more than five and a half centuries, an ornament of which any city might well be proud. The corner stone was laid with imposing ceremonies, July 29, 1337, in the presence of all the officials of the city. The supervision of the building was entrusted to the silk guild; and the income from the excise of grain, etc., was devoted to paying the cost. Each guild of the city was ordered to adorn one pillar of the loggia with a statue of its patron saint; and further, to collect yearly from its officers and members, on its festal day, offerings, to be distributed to "God's poor" by the Company of Orsanmichele.[2]

---

[1] Repetti, 42–43. [2] Villani, III, 252. [3] *Ibid.*, IV, 8.

While providing for such great structures, the city did not forget small matters, as will be seen from the effort to secure for their patron saint an altar piece [*dossale*] worthy of him and themselves. This great work in silver, weighing 325 pounds, was 114 years in perfecting, being placed successively in the hands of the best goldsmiths of the city, for its adornment, which should be of the richest and best. Among those entrusted with work on it, was Thomaso Finiguerra, from whose testings of his work, perhaps of this very piece, arose the art of engraving; here the father of Ghiberti applied his skill, and perhaps thereby inspired the flame of genius in his son, to whom we owe the "gates of Paradise;" the beautiful statue of St. John the Baptist, in the middle, is the work of Michelozzo, who showed himself as able thus in small matters, as he was in designing the great palace of the Medici. So also among the many who devoted themselves to the completion of this wonderful work are found the names of others, well known to fame, as Pollajuolo and Verrocchio.[1] Meantime the city did not forget the church buildings; for we find a tax levied in 1459 to promote the construction of Santa Maria del Carmine; and another in 1475 for Santo Spirito; and again in 1491 for Santa Croce.

---

[1] Half a century previous a brick structure had been erected here for the same purpose. (Villani, III, 176.)

[2] Villani, III, 152–153; Ammirato, 316.

Taxes as a rule were not light in Florence; and as the city in its corporate capacity did so much for charity and public works, one might suppose that individuals would think they had contributed enough in taxes for such purposes. But this does not seem to have affected their private munificence. Thus in 1441, the Countess Elizabeth da Battifolle gave her castle of Borgo alla Collina to the community, reserving to herself only the patronage of its church during her lifetime.[2] In 1465 died Castello Quaratesi, who left his wealth to the merchants' guild, recommending to them his convent of *San Salvatore del Monte;* and from the proceeds of this bequest, the church and convent of like name were constructed, which still adorn the neighborhood of the well known Piazzale Michelangelo.[3] The chapels of the Pazzi and other ancient families; the magnificent works of San Lorenzo, which owe their origin to the Medici; and the picturesque façade of Santa Maria Novella, which was built according to the original and striking design of Leo Battista Alberti, at the expense of Paolo Rucellai and his two sons;—are all due to wealthy citizens who possessed the Florentine love of the beautiful and love for the Church.

---

[1] Ademollo, II, 719.

[2] *Giornale Stor. Archiv. Toscan.*, I, 48.

[3] Ademollo, II, 387.

If the citizens officially and as private individuals thus did so much for the churches, the clergy showed at times that they also were capable of self-sacrifice for the public welfare. St. Antonino returned to the poor and needy all he received as archbishop from the estates of the church, as well as all the contributions of the pious; reserving for himself only so much as was absolutely necessary for a meagre existence. So Savonarola, in times of disease and starvation, gave not only his time and personal assistance, but persuaded the officers of his church, San Marco, to lay hands on the treasures of the church, and appropriate them or their value when sold, to the alleviation of the almost universal distress in the city; and by these means he procured immense sums for public charity.[1]

It would be interesting to study the details, to some extent at least, of the history of the different public works of the Florentines, from the building of the city walls with the stones of the houses of the banished Ghibellines, to the time when the great artist Michael Angelo turned his head and hand to enlarging the extent of those walls for the defense of the city in the sixteenth century; to learn why the battlemented Palazzo Pubblico stands in a corner of the open square instead of at the centre of one side, and why the lines of its foundations are irregular instead of being rectangular; to follow its growth from a comparatively small edifice, with simple courts and few halls, to the enormous building which now delights the eye, with its superbly ornamented court, its great halls, and wealth of artistic adornment. It would be pleasing indeed to vizualize the laying of the corner-stone of the great cathedral, and see its mosaic walls rise foot by foot as the years roll on; while its designer, Arnolfo, and his successors are gathered one after another to their ancestors, though their ideas live on and on, more imperishable than the beautiful marbles in which they have shaped them. It would be interesting to witness the contest of the architects over the possibility of raising the mighty dome which had been planned to outrival anything that the world had ever built or should build; and then to behold the accomplishment of the great undertaking, and to see the dedication of the grand edifice, amidst all the splendors of Church and State.

---

[1] Perrens, II, 122–123.

Interesting as such works doubtless are, with their mingling of personalities, it will tend perhaps better to an understanding of the conditions of life in the little republic, if we obtain some idea of the manner in which the great sum of money was collected with which to erect those costly edifices, and carry on the other numerous public undertakings of this busy community. The first provision made to meet the expenses of the building of the cathedral called for a tax of four *danari* in the pound, or 1.7 per cent., of all which passed through the *camera* or tax office of the community; to which was added a poll tax of two *soldi* for each man.[1] Soon afterwards the wars and distractions of the community caused the suspension of work on the great structure; but the passage of a quarter of a century did not weaken the desire for the possession of the cathedral as planned according to the wish of the city fathers; and in 1331 we find them passing another ordinance for the renewal of the work with vigor. For this purpose they give the supervision of the building into the hands of the wool guild, which was the richest of all the guilds and had among its members many of the most public-spirited men of the city. A tax of two danari in the pound on the affairs of the camera, and of four danari in the pound of all taxes marketed to citizens, provided 12,000 pounds or lire per annum for building expenses; to which was added a voluntary contribution on the part of the guild, which was raised in the following manner. Every shop of the guild was called upon to have a box, into which was dropped "God's penny" after each sale; and by this means an extra 2,000 pounds were yearly added to the sum devoted by the government to the great work whose accomplishment the city so earnestly desired.[1] The years continued to pass, and new generations to arise and disappear, without seeing the completion of the undertaking. Then came the theocratical rule of Savonarola, in whose time still another method of raising money for the prosecution of the design was invented; and that was to place a tax of twenty soldi on the probate of every will. As the law provided that no will should have effect without it contained this bequest to the work on the cathedral, it was a most effective means of accomplishing its end; so much so that the successors of Savonarola in the rule of Florence continued the same method through all the vicissitudes of the city up to the present century, and it may possibly still be in force.[2]

---

[1] Villani, IV, 20–21.

More or less similar laws were enacted in order to provide money for the building of the other great structures of the city; into the details of which we shall not enter, but rather try to form some idea of the general manner of taxation in the community. Manner we call it rather than system, for the accidents of friendship and favoritism entered so largely into the account that systematization was practically impossible. There was a short period during the latter half of the thirteenth century when there were practically no taxes; but that time soon passed, never to return; and the future showed almost constant progress toward aggravating the burdens of the taxpayer, with but the rarest intervals of amelioration. During the short and stormy rule of the Duke of Athens, in 1327, there was inaugurated a census of property, including realty and personalty, as well as the profits of business, with the avowed purpose of getting an equitable basis of taxation; but the inquiry was conducted secretly, and a foreign judge was appointed for each *sesto* of the city, who on the examination of seven witnesses, presumably of his own selection, had power to levy the taxes. The amounts were to be paid at a certain per cent on the value of realty, and at fixed rates for the other kinds of property; but as the appraisement was arbitrary, the assessment also was of the same nature. Accordingly there arose in the city great complaint at the injustice of the measure, without however altering the result. In this manner the unfortunates were mulcted of some 80,000 florins, which were appropriated by the tyrannical duke and his minions.[1]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, VI, 226.

[2] Mazzei, I, 80–81, note 3.

The rule of the duke proved too self-seeking for the Florentines, and he was forced to abdicate; but the taxes continued. For the years 1336–1338 Villani gives an account of the income and expenses of the republic, from which we extract some items of especial interest, as illustrating the sources of the wealth of the city: thus 90,200 florins were paid for duties on imports and exports; from which fact we gather that the Florentines had not arrived at the appreciation of the value even of free export, not to speak of free trade; 59,300 florins were derived from the retail sale of wine, "*pagando il terzo.*" Can this mean that wine was taxed at one-third its value? The farmers of the surrounding country contributed 30,000 florins to the city's income; the tax on salt realized for the city treasury 14,450 florins; 7,000 was the income from the confiscated goods of those who had been declared "rebels;" the money-lenders paid 3,000 for the privilege of exacting usury; contracts, requiring the sanction of the governmental forms, paid therefor 11,000 florins; the butchers of the city paid 15,000 florins, and those of the environs, 4,000; the prisons of the city, instead of being a public burden, produced a revenue of 4,050 florins, while those of the country paid 500; the citizens who were honored by being called out of the city to fill public stations in other places, paid for their absence by a tax which brought the city during those two years 3,500 florins; flour and milling privileges netted the city 4,250 florins; another item mentions the receipt of 1,400 florins "from the accused and excused;" can it be that a person once accused in the courts had to pay a fine, even if acquitted?

---

[1] Villani, VI, 26.

Coinage was evidently not free, as it paid the state a profit of 2,300 florins per annum on the gold, and 1,500 on the small change; "condemnations" brought to the treasury in these years 10,000 florins, but more frequently netted 20,000 florins; there was also a tax on *sporti*, which were balconies or doors that projected beyond the street line of the house, the tax on which produced a revenue of 5,550 florins. This would not be a bad idea to adopt against such people as insist on making themselves prominent by building beyond the line of their neighbors' houses. A good large tax applied yearly would either lessen the desire for prominence very materially, or add greatly to the income of the city. The young Florentines who were so fond of carrying weapons had also to pay for the privilege, and thus added 1,300 florins to the city's income.[1]

Varchi states that up to 1427 all taxes in Florence were personal; but this statement is contradicted by a passage in a letter of Mazzei, who says that the taxes on land have to be paid before the 20th of February, "on penalty of a quarter," —which phrase probably means that the amount was augmented one-fourth in case of delay. At any rate it makes it certain that at that time, about the year 1400, taxes on land were levied by the city.[2] Even as early as this era there existed apparently the custom of collecting forced loans; for a note to Mazzei mentions the case of Datini who was thus compelled to pay from October 1401 to April 1402 the sum of 881 florins.[3] The taxes at that time were levied by a number of men in each district, who were elected for the purpose; but the number was not the same in all the districts; and from the number, each district gave the name to its tax,—a rather peculiar sort of Florentine wit. Thus where there were seven in the committee, if it may be so called, the tax was called a Settina; if nine, a Novina; if twenty, a Ventina, etc.[4]

---

[1] Villani, VII, 194–198.

[2] Mazzei, I, 173.

[3] I, 438, note 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 177, note 1.

In the year 1427 was introduced the *Catasto*, which was the Domesday Book of Florence. Whether or not the Florentines had a land tax before this date, they certainly had it afterwards. An account of all the property in the community, of whatever description, was taken and registered in four great books, that is one for each quarter of the city.[1] All the property was to be reckoned as capitalized at seven per cent per annum. Thus it was really a man's income which was assessed; for if he had an income of seven florins, he was reckoned to have a hundred florins capital invested. In order to relieve the very poor from the effects of this way of estimating, fourteen florins income were allowed to go untaxed for each child in the family. Every hundred florins above the amount so allowed as capitalized, was taxed at one-half florin yearly. In addition to this there was a poll tax, which varied from one to six florins per year, the amount levied being based on the occupation of the individual; and every man over eighteen years of age was compelled to contribute to this tax.[2] This method of taxation remained in force, though with variations, until 1494, when it was abolished in the general alteration of Florentine affairs.

For those who did not pay their taxes promptly when due, there was a special register, known as the *Specchio*, or mirror; and any one whose name was written therein could not fill any place of honor or emolument under the city government, either in the city itself or in any of its outside dominions.[3] However, this proviso does not seem to have kept many men out of office; for as we have seen in another connection, this very law was made a basis of bribery; for the wealthy stood ready to pay the back taxes of those who were likely to enter office, in order to use their power after they were in possession of the post. This in itself was bad enough; but the Medici went still further, and used the power of arbitrary taxation to destroy their political enemies. Listen to the judgment of Guicciardini, a man of affairs, of good judgment, and an eye-witness of many of the things which he relates. "It is perfectly well known how much nobility, how great riches were destroyed by Cosimo, and also in the times following, by means of the taxes. And this was the reason why the house of Medici would never allow that a settled manner of levying the taxes be adopted, so that they would be assessed by the law, as it were. For they wanted to preserve always to themselves the power to strike with arbitrary means those whom they wished."[1] That such was the case is borne out by the facts as derived from other sources.

---

[1] Cavalcanti, I, 216, n. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, 197–198.

[3] Varchi, III, Liber XIII, p. 35.

In order to accomplish this the more successfully, there was invented or at least introduced a modification of the tax, which received the name of *Scala*, from the fact that the new taxes were graded according to the wealth of the tax-payer. The rate-payers were divided into three classes by the law establishing this tax; those having an income of 50 florins or less per annum paid at the rate of four in the hundred; from that sum up to 1500 income, paid at the rate of 16 in the hundred; and those whose incomes were still larger paid at the rate of 33½ in the hundred. If the tax had been levied in reality according to these rates, it would have been no more unjust than many of the modern ideas of taxation, which would make the wealthy pay a larger proportion of their wealth than should be collected from the comparatively poor; but there was still another provision to the law, which made it a terrible instrument in the hands of those in power; and this was, that the assessment was to be "at the discretion and according to the conscience of the assessors."[2] The entire revenue of the city was estimated at 550,000 florins, and this new arrangement was expected to yield 80,000 florins.[3]

Within twenty years after his return from exile Cosimo had raised in extraordinary and arbitrary taxes 4,875,000 florins from 77 of the families whom he did not consider particularly friendly to himself; and of this sum, a single man, Giannozzo Manetti, for whom he had a particular dislike, was compelled to pay 135,000 florins, by which he was made a bankrupt.[1] Sometimes the unfortunates were called on for a contribution every month, sometimes for a sum four or five times as large as a usual assessment, without a moment's warning. During a time these exactions were made under the pretext of the necessities of war; but when the war ceased, the exactions continued nevertheless.[2] So openly was the matter carried on that an ambassador of Milan at Florence wrote to Francesco Sforza, his master, that the taxes of Florence were levied arbitrarily.[3] In 1446 a *Balzello*, or extra tax was levied by which to raise 40,000 florins in an emergency; but so arbitrarily was the assessment made that the orator Lionardo d'Arezzo was assessed for 1500 florins, while the entire wealthy family of the Gherardi had but 8 florins to pay; and Cosimo de' Medici himself was called upon for only 222; however, as the case was urgent, the latter in fact contributed 30,000 of the 40,000 wanted.[4] As the treasury of the republic was open to him in times of plenty, he doubtless reimbursed himself later, whereas those not in the ring did not have this easy method of recovering the money so advanced to the state in time of distress. The matter finally became so unbearable that some of the ancient families left the city, and retired to their villas in the country.[5] But even here they were not safe from the rapacity of the "Father of his country;" for twice a year messengers and troops scoured the country, emptied the houses, and gathered or destroyed the crops; and for all this, not a danaro of rebate was allowed, of the arbitrary or regular taxes which were demanded of the families so maltreated.[6]

---

[1] Reggimento della Città di Firenze, 40.

[2] Perrens, I, 85.

[3] *Ibid.*, 86.

Thus we can gain some idea of the manner in which the so-called bloodless establishment of the power of the Medici was accomplished; but it was a kind of victory which seems to us more worthy of a Shylock than of a Cæsar. The method, however, suited the men and the times, and was continued with the same success in accomplishing its end, by the descendants of its first employer. On regaining their liberties for a time, at the end of the century, the Florentines abolished this hated instrument of tyranny, and decreed, according to the vote of the Consiglio Grande, that for the future there should be but the one tax of ten per cent on the value of immovable property, and that this tax should be collected once and no oftener per annum, and that there should be no drawbacks whatever.[1] Unfortunately the public affairs were in such a bad condition that it was impossible to abide by this decision, and the scala was reintroduced in 1499.[2] But the time was at hand when the Medici should return as recognized lords of the city; and the citizens as such would have no more voice in the management of their public affairs; when the taxes would be levied and all other matters carried on as the duke wished, not as the representatives of the people might think best; when the "dissembled reign" of the Medici would give place to the titular dukedom, and the lords of Florence would be princes in name as they had long been in reality.

---

[1] Burckhardt, I, 141.

[2] Perrens, 84–85, 173.

[3] *Ibid.*, 86.

[4] Cavalcanti, II, 214–216.

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 198.

[6] Perrens, I, 86–87.

---

[1] Perrens, II, 133.

[2] Guicciardini, *Storia*, 221.

IX.

AMUSEMENTS.

The Florentines were excitable and emotional, and delighted in games of chance; they gave free play to their thought in movement or gesture, and engaged naturally in the production of the drama; above all they were musical, and loved to pass the time in playing on sweet-toned instruments and in singing. Connected with their games of chance, the vice of gambling was developed to such a degree that no civil law could suppress it, and no moral teaching persuade them to leave it.

As early as 1376 there was a law prohibiting the game of *Naibi*, which was played with painted cards, but the method of playing which seems now to be lost. Among the by-laws of an ancient company, still preserved, is one which forbids the brethren to play with dice or naibi.[1] Even wealth and culture did not keep men from the evil habit, as is illustrated by the case of Buonaccorso Pitti, who occupied some of the highest posts of honor in the gift of Florence, and wrote a history of his own time, etc. He travelled through a large part of Europe, gambling everywhere; and by his talents and affable manners made himself acceptable at numerous courts, including those of France and Burgundy. At one time he was master of the horse to the Duke of Orleans, who was assassinated November 23, 1407. On that day Pitti wrote in his diary, "I made a hundred gold florins to-day by a bargain in wool,"—thus showing that even in the midst of such a tragedy his spirit of speculation was active.[1] He finally returned to Florence with a fortune, which was largely the product of his gaming. The money amassed in this manner was that which enabled his son Luca Pitti to acquire almost the first place in the state, and in his pride to commence building the famous Pitti palace, which was destined to become not a private, but a ducal, and finally a royal residence.

---

[1] Mazzei, II, 105 and note 2.

The gaming still continued, as we find in one of the carnival songs, where we read: "To have money we will cast aside every virtue and even heaven; for the dice and cards are our god. Gambling is indulged in by both the master-weavers and their cashiers, and every worthy prelate now-a-days makes profession of it. Bishops and cavaliers follow this standard; the layman plays, so do the priest and monk, even to the abbot with his friars."[2] One of the favorite games of cards was *Frussi*, which still continues to be played under the name of Primiera. In this game four cards are dealt to each player, and he who receives four of a kind wins the stakes. Lorenzo de' Medici refers to this game in one of his carnival songs, and speaks of it as *maledetto* or cursed; and advises him who would get out of it well to go into it very slowly, and stake but little and sparingly. He adds moreover, that in his day it was played by everybody, even to the peasants.[3] Still another game was in vogue, which seems to have been the Three-card monte of that day; and it was later prohibited by law. This was called *Bassetta*, and was played by the dealer laying three cards on the table, and allowing each of the others to draw a card from the pack, with the chance, which was very small, of being able to match one of those already exposed. With these vices, the Florentines evidently combined the greater one of cheating; for in the Song of the Players reference is made to loaded dice and false cards.

---

[1] See Yriarte, *Florence*, 123–4.

[2] *Canto de' Giuocatori*, by M. Dell' Ottonaio, Herald of the signoria.

[3] *Canto dei Bericuocolai.*

But they had nobler games as well, in which adroitness and strength were the elements of victory, not chance or cheating. One of the favorites among these was called *Pallone*, and it continued to be popular among the Florentine men until very recently. It was played with a ball of good size, filled with air, and struck by the fist from one to the other; the object being for each player not to let the ball come to rest on his side of the field. It is somewhere told of Pietro de' Medici, that he was so inordinately fond of this sport as even to neglect his business and the affairs of state in order to indulge his passion for it. Another game of ball, also much beloved, was *Maglio*, which was played with a wooden ball and mallet. The ground devoted to this sport was on the east side of the church of San Marco, extending thence to the city wall. One player would challenge the others to knock the ball to a certain spot at a distance; and the winner was he who succeeded in placing the ball nearest the goal. The goal however was generally fixed at such a distance that only the one or two most expert players could drive the ball so far. This game was introduced into Florence about the year 1480, and was played with passion for the remainder of the century; but the Medici, become dukes, and lovers of less rough sport, prohibited its indulgence.[1] Reference to it also is made in one of the carnival songs, where there is mention of the stiff backbone, good sight, and strong arms which are necessary to play it well. Lovers of foot-ball will be pleased to know that their favorite game was also played at Florence during the days of republican rule, and was not prohibited at the incoming of the ducal régime. One of the daring pranks of the young men of the early part of the sixteenth century was to have a band of music seated on the ridge of the roof of the noble church of Santa Croce and play, while twenty-five whites and twenty-five greens did battle for the foot-ball goal on the piazza. This game they called *Calcio;* and one day while they were carrying on their fun as above mentioned, some one, evidently horrified by the godlessness of the musical accompaniment from such a position, shot at the musicians, however, without hitting any of them.[1]

---

[1] Ademollo, I, 42.

Chess was played in Florence at least as early as the begining of the fourteenth century; for there is record of that date of the murder of a certain Brunelleschi, while engaged in the game.[2] Another game sometimes referred to was called *Pome*, and was for a time held in high esteem. It consisted in throwing a spear, while running, at a suspended apple, which it required a great deal of skill to pierce in this manner.

From this partial enumeration of the outdoor sports and table plays of the Florentines of the Renaissance it will be seen that they were not lacking in plays which stir the blood, give exercise, and instil energy, independence, and manhood. Perhaps the most notable quality characteristic of the Florentine plays in general is their extreme simplicity; for all that I have been able to find mentioned or described were of this nature; and the same is true of the Italian games to-day. Pallone I have seen in the little town of Prato, played by half-grown boys; but so far as I could learn it is no longer played by men, at least in Florence. The other games which are now in vogue are all simple in their rules, although the men often develop great skill in the play itself. In fact the naïveté of the Italians in general enables them to be easily entertained, which quality is in striking contrast to the novelty, or at least extraordinary skill required, in order to interest Anglo-Saxons. This idea is exhibited also in the street shows, which they have enjoyed for ages.

The mildness of their climate permitted the celebration of May-day in a manner more consistent with the idea of the vernal beauty of that day than is possible with us. On that day they were accustomed to decorate their front doors with green branches and to have their common merry-making largely in the open air. It was on such a day, and by the opportunity offered in the general neglect of stiff formality, that the boy Dante met the young Beatrice Portinari, who was destined to exercise such an influence on the literature of all Italy. One of the customs of their fête days was to erect platforms at the street corners, on which buffoons and prestidigitators showed their skill to the admiring crowds; and they probably took up a collection afterward, though on the latter point, history remains silent.

---

[1] Varchi, II, 322.

[2] Capponi, I, 154.

The season of Epiphany was in Florence, as in merry old England, a period of gayety, when innocent jokes and sport of a mild nature might be indulged in even at the expense of a stranger, without offense. One of the methods of producing hilarity was the making of rag babies, or stuffed paddies, which were carried about the streets on the eve of Epiphany, and placed at the windows the following day. Connected with all their forms of pleasure, was the universally-beloved music; and even at the present time, when life in general has become so much more artificial, it is a very frequent occurrence on warm evenings to encounter bands of strolling singers, and players on the mandolin and guitar, who are out for their own amusement and not for pay. Anyone who can sing or play seems free to join in with those who begin the sport, whether previously acquainted or not.

In the year 1333 great preparations were made for the celebration of the fête of the city's patron saint, San Giovanni; and for a whole month before the great day, two companies of volunteer associates were formed for making universal hilarity in the city. The one had its headquarters in the Via Ghibellina, and consisted of about 300 men, dressed all in yellow; the other met in the Corso de' Tintori, was about 500 strong, and the members were dressed in white. The members of these companies went about the city, with bands of musicians, and established their Court of Love at different points. Here they would dance and sing, have plays and fun, and pay honor to their king, who was dressed in cloth of gold, and crowned.[1] Let it be remarked by the way that the young men who provided this entertainment, and gave meat and drink to all who attended their court, are classed by the historian as artizans; and we have a good illustration of the fact that Florentine workmen of the period did not labor for starvation wages. Passing over a century and a half, during which period wealth had been concentrating in fewer hands, and the artizans were being separated more and more from the capitalists, we arrive at the epoch of the Medici and of Savonarola.

One of the chief means of gaining popularity adopted by the Medici was by providing entertainments for the people, as the Cæsars of Rome had done centuries before. "Games and Grain" might well be employed as the rallying cry for any one desirous of currying favor with the populace, as the history of Florence as well as of Rome teaches us. Lorenzo de' Medici and other celebrated men wrote songs to be sung with the street amusements of the day, and paid their share of the expenses of the great public entertainments which were devised for their benefit. Even the pious Savonarola could not restrain the love of merriment of his fellow-citizens, and does not seem to have tried to do so, but merely turned it into new channels. Thus on Palm Sunday, 1496, he arranged a procession of 8000 boys and girls, all clad in white, each wearing a red cross, and crowned with olive, and bearing a branch of the tree of peace in the hand. The procession was headed by a tabernacle on which was painted Christ, riding an ass, both protected from the rays of the sun by a large parasol. Following in the train of the children were the officers of state, and innumerable men and women, making in all the largest procession which had ever been witnessed in Florence. All shout the watchword, given apparently by Savonarola himself, "Long live Christ, our King."[2] A similar procession, two years later, was not so large, as the originator of the idea was then fast losing favor; and the bystanders tore the crosses from the children, and threw mud and worse at them, even dead cats.[1] The procession ended, those who had taken part in it assemble in front of San Marco, and engage in one of those strange scenes of religious revelry which it is so difficult for us to understand. In the middle of the piazza they planted the cross, and surrounded it with the standards of the different quarters of the city. Three concentric rings were then formed around them, the ecclesiastics and novices, each accompanied by a child dressed as an angel, forming the first ring; then came the young clericals and laymen interspersed; and the last ring was composed of the priests and old men, their foreheads wreathed with olive crowns; grasping hands with each other, they united in singing songs of praise and the not very poetic verses of Girolamo Benivieni.[2] Only a month after Savonarola's death, on the festival of San Giovanni, the public were entertained in a very different manner; namely, by a set piece of fireworks representing a giant, a pig, and some dogs. These were the allegorical figures of Valori, the giant, a popular leader, brutally killed by two relatives of men who had been executed under his administration as gonfaloniere; the pig stood for Savonarola, who was often so denominated by his enemies; and the dogs were his followers, the so-called Piagnoni.[3]

---

[1] Villani, VI, 299.

[2] Perrens, II, 298.

The light-hearted gayety of the Florentines was always ready to spring to the surface on the slightest provocation. The number of holidays was very great; for they celebrated not only the regular festivals of the Church, which are very numerous, but each guild had also its patron saint, whose day was made one of hilarity for everybody connected with the guild. On the arrival of carnival time, however,—those few days of good eating, good drinking, and unlimited fun, before the decrees of the Church called for sobriety and repentance, their drollery and extravagance knew no bounds. One of their favorite pastimes at this season was for crowds of youth to make the rounds of the city with foot-balls, and batter them against the citizens, ad libitum, but generally on the back so that it would not hurt particularly. But they went further and threw them into the stores, and made such confusion therewith, that it was not unusual for the shop-keepers to close their places of business in consequence. Then, tired of this sport, the young scapegraces assembled in Mercato Nuovo and joined in a regular game of foot ball.[1] The license of the time was general; and the boys of the city did not fail to claim their share; by which means they succeeded in gaining not only fun during the day, but gathered thereby enough money to enable them to feast during the evening. One sport consisted in providing long poles, with which the boys barred the way of passengers in the narrow streets, and refused to let them go by without paying toll. With the product of their ill-gotten but good-naturedly paid gains, they provided their banquets of the evening.[2] Then the hilarity was at its height; and they danced by the light of great bonfires.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 276–277.

[2] Perrens, II, 272.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 346.

Even in the fourteenth century the Florentine festivals had become so celebrated that their "festival artists" made journeys in Italy, evidently seeking and gaining employment in other cities, to arrange their festivals.[3] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries their productions for the purpose of entertaining the people became not only very costly but really magnificent. The greatest and most original feature of the Florentine carnival was the allegorical procession. A modern writer, Olindo Guerrini, gives the credit for the invention at least of the allegorical cars, to Lorenzo de' Medici; while Vasari says that to Piero di Cosimo, a well known painter of the day, the greatest improvements were due; and that the whole was but a natural development of the old carnival ideas. One thing is certain, that to Lorenzo is due the credit of improving the splendor of the displays; and many of the best songs for such occasions are attributed to his pen. These songs were either for solos, four parts, or for chorus; but in whatever way intended to be sung, they contributed greatly to the entertainment. The cost of these carnival "Canti" as they were called, must have been enormous; if we may judge of their magnificence by the descriptions of the few which remain to us. On one occasion there were in the procession, accompanying the triumphal cars, 300 masked gentlemen superbly robed, each on horseback, and accompanied by six male servants bearing torches, with which the scene was illuminated.[1] One of the greatest vagaries on such an occasion was an invention of the above-mentioned Piero di Cosimo, who prepared with the greatest secrecy what he called the *Car of Death.* This was an exceedingly large chariot, all painted black, and ornamented with skulls and cross-bones in white; and drawn by black buffaloes. On top was an immense figure of Death, with a scythe in his hand; and on the borders of the chariot were depicted a number of covered graves. At every stoppage of the chariot these graves opened, and out of them came figures all clothed in black, with the skeleton so perfectly painted thereon that they appeared in the night to be moving figures of Death. Seating themselves on their respective graves these figures sang in melancholy strains a long plaintive song, which translated reads as follows:

---

[1] Varchi, III, Liber xiii, p. 20.

[2] Perrens, II, 207.

[3] Burckhardt, *Cultur d. R.*, II, 145.

> "Grief and penitence we declare
> Now torment us all the while;
> Through the world, to and fro,
> Rest we never, crying repent.
> We were once as you are now,
> You will be as us you see;
> Dead you'll be as now are we.
> In the grave there's no enjoyment,
> Nothing to do but to repent.

---

[1] Perrens, I, 566.

> In life we passed the carnival
> Singing ever of love, sweet love;
> Always going from bad to worse,
> Our sin and shame increasing.
> Now through the world we make our way,
> Calling to all, repent, repent.
> Oh! the blind, the proud, insensate,—
> Passing time brings all to naught.
> Pomp, glory, honor, and state,
> All pass away; and when too late,
> Comes the end in the sepulcher,
> With nothing to do but to repent."

The song ended, they disappeared again in their coffins, drew the lids over themselves, and the procession moved on. Humor of such a nature is strange indeed; and the possibility of getting pleasure out of such a representation, in the midst of carnival follies, only shows to what extremes man will go in his desire for novelty. It may be added that the artist who invented this stirring carnival celebration was considered by some to be more or less insane; and he certainly in our day would have enjoyed the doubtful celebrity of being considered a "crank." However, on the same basis that some women are more happy when they are miserable, it may be assumed that the gay Florentines could look upon this wild prank as productive of merriment; and laugh at what more sombre minds would consider a fearful reminder of the possibilities of an awful awakening in the world to come. Even among the Florentines there were some who looked upon it as a sign of approaching evil.

Generally, however, the carnival processions took on a more æsthetic aspect, and represented the triumph of a conqueror, an act of chivalry, or symbolically the trades and professions. On the occasion of a member of the Medici family coming to the papal chair, the carnival was celebrated with especial magnificence. There were two processions, each of which alone would have done credit to the city, and have been sufficient in itself for an ordinary year. The second procession probably surpassed in splendor anything of the kind which Florence has ever before or since attempted on such an occasion. The plan of the whole was originated by Jacopo Nardi, and was worked out in detail by such men as Andrea del Sarto, who was one of those engaged on the architecture of the chariots; and Piero da Vinci, father of the celebrated Leonardo, who helped design the original and superb costumes. The painting of the chariots, which is highly praised by Vasari, was all done by Jacopo da Pontormo. The first car was drawn by two bulls, caparisoned with green, and represented the Golden Age, personated by Saturn and Janus, who were elegantly and appropriately depicted on the summit, surrounded by their various attributes. Accompanying the car were six pairs of shepherds, on horseback, naked, except for a partial covering of skins of martens and sables; and wearing boots of different kinds, patterned after the antique. Their heads were wreathed, and they carried shepherds' bags of various designs. Their horses were not saddled, but covered instead with skins of lions, tigers, and lynxes, the gilded claws hanging picturesquely on either side. The fastenings were of cord of gold, and the stirrups were made of the heads of sheep, dogs, and the like. The reins were of green and silver cord. Each one of these men had an escort of four under-shepherds on foot, who were clothed in less costly skins, and carried torches made in imitation of dried laurel and pine branches.

The second car was drawn by two oxen, their horns gilded, their heads garlanded, and their bodies decked with rich draperies. On the car, beautifully painted, stood Numa Pompilius, with the books of religion, and surrounded by all ranks of priests and the various preparations for sacrifice; for in him the glory of the Roman religion saw its first institutor. Accompanying the car were six priests, riding mules, their heads covered with fine linen magnificently ornamented with ivy leaves wrought in gold and silver. Their priestly robes were of antique cut, embroidered and fringed with gold. Some carried censers, others vases of gold, and the like. On foot, in the train, were many priests of lower rank, carrying torches made in the image of ancient candelabra.

The third car typified the age of virtue and prosperity in Rome, as it existed under the consulate of Titus Manlius Torquatus. It was drawn by eight horses covered with gold tissue, and accompanied by six pairs of senators in togas, escorted by great numbers of lictors bearing fasces, axes, etc. The fourth chariot was drawn by four buffaloes, to which it was attempted to give the appearance of elephants. This was the triumphal car of Julius Caesar, returned from his war in Egypt. It was accompanied by six pairs of men at arms, clad in rich robes of antique style, fringed with gold, and carrying lances at rest. The escort on foot was light-armed, and bore torches in the forms of various trophies. On the fifth car sat Augustus Caesar, crowned with a laurel wreath, the acknowledged ruler of the world, his chariot drawn by horses with wings, in the guise of griffins. On twelve superb horses sat the great poets of the world, all crowned with laurel, and variously habited each according to his province. Their reins were made in imitation of ancient manuscripts, and on each was the name of him who held it.

On the sixth car sat Trajan, the giver of law not only to the world of his own day but also to a large part of the civilized world of the future. It was drawn by four pairs of bullocks, in elegant draperies, and accompanied by six pairs of doctors of laws, wearing long togas, over which were bishops' capes of fur, according to ancient custom. A great number of amanuenses, copyists, and notaries, bearing books, manuscripts, etc., followed.

After these came the seventh chariot, the crowning glory of this carnival festival. On this were many figures beautifully carved in relief, and others painted exquisitely by the hand of Pontormo. Those representing the four cardinal virtues were especially praised for their extraordinary grace and beauty. The chariot was surmounted by a large ball representing the earth, on the top of which lay a human figure on its face, clad in worn-out and rusty armour. In the back of the armour was a great rent, out of which was rising a small boy, entirely naked, and all gilded. The dead figure in armour represented the Age of Iron, which was the past; and the gilded boy, the new Age of Gold, which was just brought again to the world by the election of a Medici to the papal throne.—The grand spectacle was over, and the excited throngs dispersed slowly, discussing this vision of glory, and the honor which was reflected on their city by one of its first citizens becoming the spiritual ruler of all Christendom. Beneath the splendor of that new Golden Age of Leo X., there was however much that was corrupt and false; and beneath the glitter of the gilding on the boy lurked the seeds of death. For ten scudi a baker had given his little son for the show, and in a few days the boy was rotting in his grave. The Medici shone in gilded splendor a little longer, and his body was a loathsome thing of corruption, even before it could be hurried to the tomb. Thus ended the second Golden Age.

The most ancient sport of the Florentines, of which we have any notice, is that of horse-racing, which was introduced in the early part of the fifth century, to celebrate the victory of Stilicho over the Scythian Radagaisus, who had besieged Fiesole, but was captured and put to death. This occurred on the 8th of October,[1] the day of Saint Reparata; and on this account the city built a church and dedicated it to her, which stood for ages on the ground now occupied by the cathedral; and great festivities were celebrated on her day. The principal amusement of the day consisted in horse-races, along the route from the Porta di Prato through the Borg Ognissanti to the Porta Santa Croce. All the city gathered to witness the exciting entertainment; and the members of the signoria left their quarters in a body and proceeded to the palace of the Lanzi, in the above-mentioned street, whence they viewed the spectacle. The prize for the winner was a splendid piece of cloth, either of the much prized red cloth of Florence, or of gold and silk brocade. This was called *Palio;* and from being at first only the name of the prize, the word palio gradually came to be employed for the race itself, as it is later found in general use. There were not only races in which the horses had riders, such as are familiar to us; but some of the races, called *dei Barberi,* were run by riderless horses, on which were fastened a certain kind of spurs which goaded them on, almost to madness; for the faster the horses ran the more the spurs were kept in activity. This cruel sport continued even into the present century in Florence, but has latterly been forbidden by law. It is still, however, an esteemed amusement in the mountain villages, in one of which I had the fortune to be a witness of such a race. It was on a Sunday afternoon, and the inhabitants of the whole surrounding country were present in gala attire. The sidewalks of the main street of the village were lined with rows of people two and three deep for its whole length, while the windows of the adjacent houses were filled with gaily dressed women. At one end of the street was the village church, with great front steps, on which were congregated perhaps a couple of hundred girls in their bright skirts and head dresses, making an extremely picturesque background to the scene. The horses were led through the whole length of the street by their respective owners, with the elaborately painted prize banner carried in front. The procession halted at the church steps, and a priest, accompanied by a youth carrying a vase of holy water, appeared on the scene and sprinkled all the horses with the water, blessing them at the same time. The horses were then led back to the starting point, and with a lash of the whip each, they were set free. Urged on by the flying spurs and by the wild shouts of the excited crowd, they dashed furiously along the course; and in a few minutes, the race, for which such elaborate preparations had been made, was over; and the owners of the horses were quarreling about the prize, because one of the horses in his mad career had fouled with another, knocking it down.

---

[1] Of the year 405, 406, 407, 408, according to different authorities.

Horse-racing formed a chief source of amusement also on other gala days in the Florence of the Renaissance, and sometimes on other routes. It was customary, for instance, on the day of St. John the Baptist, beginning in the year 1288, when the Florentine troops were encamped before Arezzo; also on the day sacred to St. Barnabas, which was especially celebrated, because on that day, in 1279, had been gained a great victory over the Ghibellines. The day of Santa Anna was likewise observed as a holiday, the same as Easter, according to a resolution of the signoria; for on that day the Florentines had driven forth the tyrant Duke of Athens; so with St. Victor's day, because of the conquest of Pisa on that day in 1364. And St. Peter's day was celebrated in the same manner for the general blessings of the city received from the hand of the Almighty, through his vicegerent Peter. The racing, begun in the early days of Florentine history, has continued to be a source of amusement to high and low even to the present; and with increasing luxury, if with less barbarity. Lorenzo de' Medici was especially fond of the sport, and is said to have kept many horses which he entered for the prizes, and to have possessed a magnificent roan, which won every race for which he was entered. But whether or not the victory was aided by the sycophancy of the Florentines, Lorenzo's biographer does not inform us.[1] With the incoming of the ducal régime, chariot racing seems to have been introduced; at least several paintings of that period, still preserved in the Ufizzi Gallery, represent such races, the chariots being great, lumbering, gilded vehicles, very different from our racing sulkies. The members of the court occupy a grand stand at one end of the Piazza di Santa Maria Novella, where these races took place; and the other spectators were accommodated upon platforms on the other sides of the square.

From an early date the custom of creating knights was in vogue, even in republican Florence, as we have before had occasion to remark. Such ceremonies afforded a good excuse for entertainments of various sorts, of which the principal was naturally, for so warlike a ceremony, the tournament. Among the sumptuary laws of the first half of the fourteenth century was one prohibiting in connection with the tournay a banquet of more than 100 places; and forbidding the newly created knights also to wear clothes appropriate to a buffoon.[1] This last provision looks very much as if the young Florentines of the day regarded the matter as one more of jest than of earnest; otherwise, why would such a legal provision have been thought necessary by the city fathers? The Piazza Santa Croce was the principal place for the jousts, as it was for other outdoor sports; and here many a young Florentine won his first spurs, it may have been in a single hand to hand contest or in a sham battle. And here also he could on occasion attend an entertainment, unknown to us, but which was regarded as amusing even as late as a century ago at the court of Maria Theresa; namely, a ball on horseback. On this same square, Lorenzo de' Medici entered the lists as a young man, in a joust whose expenses of 10,000 florins were paid for by himself, which was given in honor of the marriage of a friend named Braccio Martello; and from which Lorenzo himself bore off the prize, an exquisite silver helmet surmounted by a figure of Mars.[2] Here were held also similar entertainments in honor of his own wedding, of which one was a sham battle, the other representing the conquest of a country.[3] Another magnificent joust, in which his younger brother took part, has been rendered famous by a poem founded on it, written by the learned friend of the Medici, Poliziano. The stanzas of this poem have been characterized as among the most beautiful in the Italian language, as they were the first of their peculiar kind. They are said to have melody without artificiality, and artistic rhythm, without neglect of sense; to possess indeed some harshness, but to be so perfect in form as never to have been surpassed by later writers in Italian, though Ariosto had greater variety and freedom of movement, and Tasso, more melody.[1] This may all be very true; but a prosaic American wishes to find something of his subject when he reads a poem as long as the one referred to; and accordingly he experiences constant disappointment as he reads page after page of pretty nothings, without finding a word of description of the tournament itself or of anything else which helps elucidate the life of the period. Even the Italians of to-day read it but very rarely, their taste also requiring something a little more apropos to modern methods of thought. Tournays in the end became so popular that they were a matter of jest and ridicule, as they degenerated in splendor and dignity; and the novellist Sachetti gives a picture of the day, of an old man of about seventy winters going out one Sunday afternoon on a hired "calico" horse, to enter the lists at Peretola. As he stopped for refreshment at an inn on the way, some wags fastened a thistle under the animal's tail; and the poor tormented brute took the bit in his mouth and ran full speed for Florence, nearly jolting the life out of the old man; and the scene ends with a lecture from his insensate wife, on the folly of his course.[2]

---

[1] Roscoe, 282.

---

[1] Villani, VI, 214.
[2] Roscoe, 426.
[3] Machiavelli, *Stor.*, 359, L. VII, C. X, 41.

As we have seen from the manner of their carnival celebration, the Florentines were capable of arranging entertainments in the most artistic manner; and this quality they displayed not only on such occasions but also when they desired to do honor to a public guest; for be it remarked, the Florentine was always as jealous of the honor of his city, if not more so, than of his own personal reputation. On the 12th of July, 1273, a spectacle was arranged, which must have given, from the artistic point of view, very keen satisfaction to this emotional people. The Guelphs and Ghibellines were to be reconciled and live in peace and harmony together for the future. On the banks of the Arno, near the Ponte delle Grazie, then called Rubaconte, were erected some large platforms; and here was assembled a company, the memory of which must have lingered long with those who were fortunate enough to be present. The central figure was that of Pope Gregory X., surrounded by his court, cardinals, and bishops. On the one side of him was Baldovino, Emperor of Constantinople; and on the other, King Charles of Anjou, with his suite. In the presence of these distinguished guests and of all the people, a papal bull was read, declaring the pain of excommunication against any and all who should ever break the peace between Guelph and Ghibelline; and as a seal of good faith, 150 leaders of the one party embraced and kissed the same number of the leaders of the other party, in the presence of the whole assembly.[1]

---

[1] Reumont, II, 68.

[2] Burckhardt, II, 109–110.

Nearly a century and a half later, another pope, Martin V., comes to the city, and preparations are made to receive him with honors corresponding to his dignity. Without ceremony he passes through the Porta San Gallo, and proceeds to the church of the same name, where he dismounts, and receives the captains of the Guelph party, who offer him a magnificent present. With them and others as escort he proceeds to where the gonfaloniere di giustizia and the members of the signoria, together with all the other magistrates of the city are assembled, clad in their richest garments, to receive him. In the procession is a large proportion of the population of the city; and as a guard of honor, there are 100 of the sons of the best families, magnificently apparelled, who carry burning tapers in their hands.[2]

A few years later, Pope Eugene IV. comes to the city, and is received with every mark of honor and distinction. As he approaches from Pisa, accompanied by a cardinal, and a host of priests and gentlemen, the captains of the Guelph party and their colleagues await him outside the Porta San Frediano.

---

[1] *Giorn. Stor. d. Archiv. Toscan.*, III, 89.

[2] Ammirato, 672.

On his arrival, they present him with a splendid white horse; and the six chiefs of the mercanzia offer a cross of exquisite workmanship. A procession is then formed, consisting of many officials of the city, and a great number of the citizens, together with all the priests and ecclesiastics of the city, attired in their finest robes, and bearing many relics of the Church. With this noble escort, he proceeds to the city gate, where the gonfaloniere and signoria, "with great magnificence and the remainder of the grandiose preparations," await him. He receives from them another horse, caparisoned, also a crimson sacerdotal robe brocaded in gold, and many other objects of great price, which are placed about the horse. With this new accession, the procession again takes up its line of march, the gonfaloniere holding the right rein of the pope's horse. They make their way through the city to Santa Maria Novella, where a fitting residence has been prepared for His Holiness. Here he dismounts, enters the church and proceeds to the high altar, where he blesses the populace, and then retires from the fatigue of his journey and elaborate reception.[1]

The pope made a long stay in the city; and as Easter approached, he desired to offer some return for the open-hearted hospitality of the Florentines. Accordingly, a magnificent mass was arranged in Santa Maria Novella; in great pomp, the gonfaloniere received at the hands of the pontiff a "most beautiful sword with a silver sheath, and a hat of beaver, covered with pearls, with pendents of ermine on either side." As a mark of especial honor to the city, the gonfaloniere was permitted to read the fifth lesson, wearing the cope, and standing in front of two officials, who held the sword and hat. An ordinance was later made that, for a perpetual memory of the honor thus done to the city, this sword and hat should be carried before the priors when they entered on the duties of their office, and likewise at certain solemn festivals.[2]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, 746–7.

[2] *Ibid.*, 752.

Sixty years later, there was formed a similar procession, to receive at the same city gate another crowned head, whose coming was hailed as a special providence of God, but whose visit proved an expensive luxury and bitter disappointment to the city. Savonarola, at the height of his power, had predicted such great results to be gained from a visit of the French king, that when at last it was known that the king was really on his way, great expectations were aroused. In honor of his coming the great doors of the Porta San Frediano had been taken from their hinges, a part of the city wall itself thrown down, and the wide moat filled up. The streets through which Charles VIII. of France was to pass were strewn with sweet-smelling herbs; the houses along the route were hung with tapestries and rich stuffs; from their windows floated banners displaying the fleur-de-lis and mottoes in letters of gold, in honor of the king. On the church doors was displayed the inscription, "*Rex, pax, restauratio libertatis.*" On the principal streets were erected stages on which actors and jugglers represented the mysteries of the Bible, and pleasant stories.

Of a very different nature was the entertainment which the city devised for the diversion of Pope Pius II. and Galeazo Sforza, on the 2d of May, 1459. This was evidently an attempt to revive old Roman ideas; for they turned the Piazza della Signoria into a grand arena, closed all entrances to it, built platforms for the populace, on all sides, whence they might witness in safety the expected combat. There were then introduced into the arena numbers of horses, bulls, cows, calves, buffaloes, wild boars, wolves, and a giraffe, together with some of the pet lions of the city. Anticipation ran high for a magnificent show such as the Florentines had never witnessed; but the strange animals forming this motley assembly, were less sanguinary than the people who owned them; and after one or two mild encounters, all settled down so peacefully, that the show became a matter of ridicule, and something

---

[1] Perrens, II, 95.

else had to be improvised for the entertainment of the distinguished guests.[1]

The theatre is now such a necessary element of the life of every city that we can scarcely realize the condition of life at a time when it was entirely unknown; such, however, was the case in early Florence as well as in other mediæval cities of Europe. But the desire for amusement and spectacles pleasing to the eye is universal; and one of the methods of satisfying this desire has been in almost all time an attempt to represent in action some interesting story. As the Church occupied all the mind as well as controlled the influence of the Middle Ages, its ministers were expected to provide satisfaction for this desire; hence the representations of the mysteries of religion became a recognized part of the church's activity. As the Florentines freed themselves from the trammels of the Church, they took upon themselves more and more the providing of their own entertainment; at first, after the fashion of the Church, and later, in more independent ways. In 1303 the quarter of San Frediano sent a band throughout the city, with the announcement that "all who would like to have news of the other world, should come on the first of May to the Ponte alla Carraia, and the adjacent banks of the Arno." Here there had been prepared stages on boats, on which was offered a representation of the Inferno, with fires, and various forms of pain and martyrdom; with men, disguised as demons, horrible to see, and others in the form of naked spirits, going through various torments with frightful cries and struggles, shocking to hear and behold. The unusual show brought a great mass of people upon the bridge, which was then of wood, and could not bear the strain; so that a portion of it fell, precipitating the people into the river, where many were drowned, and vast numbers injured. Hence the jest of the announcement that the people could learn something of the next world became a terrible reality; and the entertainment turned the whole city to mourning.[1]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 199–200.

Although it is well known that such plays or mysteries were more or less common throughout the fourteenth century, no manuscript of the text used in them seems to be preserved; but the oldest writing of the kind known still to exist is an anonymous manuscript of a play entitled San Giulano, written in the first half of the fifteenth century.[2] In 1418, Leon Battista Alberti, then but twenty years of age, wrote a comedy entitled Filodossio, which was such a successful imitation of the classical style, that nearly two centuries later an editor of Lucca deceived himself as to its origin, and printed it as an antique.[3] The revival of the ancient idea of the theatre, however, was due to the exertions of the Academy in Florence, through whose influence some of the comedies of Plautus were played in Latin in 1474; and in order to make them popular, they were afterwards translated into the vulgar tongue, so that the less cultured also might enjoy them.[4] About the same time Galeazo Maria Sforza visited Florence, and for his entertainment a series of religious plays was instituted; the Annunciation being given at the church of San Felice, the Ascension, at Santa Maria del Carmine, and the descent of Holy Ghost on the Apostles, at Santo Spirito. This last mystery was especially popular among the Florentines, and was given every year; but this time it resulted disastrously; for some of the fire used in the representation got beyond control, and igniting the neighboring wood-work of the church, the structure was entirely destroyed.[5]

The brothers Pulci were very active in this field of literature, and many of their compositions yet remain to give an idea of the condition of the dramatic literature of the day. The pen of Bernardo produced religious dramas, such as the

---

[1] Villani, IV, 130.
[2] Ademollo, II, 533–534.
[3] *Biografia Universale*, Art. Alberti.
[4] Perrens, I, 558.
[5] Machiavelli, *Storia*, VII, Ch. 5. Perrens, I, 346.

Death of St. Jerome, the Passion of Jesus Christ, the Vengeance of Jesus Christ by the hand of Vespasian, and Madonna Antonia. Luca Pulci also engaged in similar work, but seems not to have been so prolific, though one of his religious dramas is still remembered, namely, San Giulano.[1] The third and most celebrated of the brothers was Luigi, from whose pen emanated the famous but much criticized poem of Morgante Maggiore, which he wrote for his own pleasure and for the delectation of Lorenzo de' Medici and his guests; and in which he brings the most sacred matters into derision, under the veil of fine irony.[2] With the introduction of song into the drama by Poliziano, the new direction was inaugurated, which was to produce the opera—the most delightful class of entertainment which the world has ever enjoyed;—and Florence had added one more item to the debt of gratitude which the civilized world of to-day owes her.

---

[1] Ademollo, I, 335.

[2] Capponi, II, 442.

X.

CITIZENSHIP.

We have examined Florentine life during the Renaissance from various points of view; and now propose to gather together such matters as will tend to show in brief what it really meant to be a citizen of the republic during that period. So much of what men are and do depends on the opportunities and influences offered by their environment, that such a study is of great importance, not only in arriving at what may be called the substance of life for the period under investigation, but also as a basis of comparison for our own age and country. One school of modern educators gives voice to the opinion that almost all of life is what education, in its broadest sense, makes it; while the investigators of the laws of heredity are apt to go to the other extreme, and attribute to one's ancestors, near and remote, all the qualities both good and bad, of which one is possessed. The truth, here as elsewhere, probably lies between the two extremes. At any rate, one thing is worth bearing in mind, and that is, that what becomes habit in the parent is very apt to be inherited by the offspring; and accordingly, whether education has much or little influence on the individual, it is almost certain to exercise a decided influence on posterity. Hence the undeniable duty of the State to educate its children; for whether the individual has or has not a future life, in which it will be possible to redeem the errors of his ways in this, it is certain that a State must find on earth the reward of its deeds, whether they be good or evil. It is for this reason that the study of history seems of such great importance to us; for the study of political science, without the basis of history, would be tantamount in our opinion to the study of chemistry without a laboratory. In former times, people theorized about chemistry and sought to make gold from the baser metals; they reasoned about the State deductively, and wrote Utopias. And just as modern chemists, confining themselves to the possible, have produced results far transcending all that was done by all the alchemists, so we believe that by making correct use of the lessons taught by history, political science would be more advanced than by all the writings of all the Utopists.

Florence, though in many respects, the earliest of modern states, was in others a state of the ancient Greek type; for she was in reality a city with outside possessions, much more than a state in the modern sense, composed of a number of organic members. And this condition of affairs was probably at the same time cause and effect of the wonderful *Individuality* of her citizens; just as was the case in her spiritual progenitor, Athens; while in Rome, with its vast population more or less amalgamated, it was *Law* which was the great outgrowth and characteristic of the national life. Florence, like Athens, prized her own liberty above all things, while treating tyrannically her subject cities; on the other hand, her gates were open to all who wished to share her intellectual privileges and her commerce; and she extended the influence of both to all parts of the civilized world. She possessed the love of her children in an extraordinary degree, notwithstanding the fact that many of them suffered imprisonment and exile unjustly at the hands of their fellow-citizens.

A modern Italian historian has expressed the opinion that Florence was "the most perfect type of the ancient communal forms."[1] As a form of government, however, it failed to answer its purpose; for it did not succeed well in protecting life, or in maintaining liberty, or in securing to its citizens the undisturbed pursuit of happiness; though it did these better than the laws of contemporary states. If our Declaration of Independence is correct in holding these to be the indubitable rights of man, then the Florence of the Renaissance was very far from fulfilling the duties of a state according to our standard. Street fights, with more or less bloodshed, took place throughout the entire period of the Renaissance, showing how cheaply life was regarded; the liberty of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was largely license, if it was not anarchy; while the so-called liberty of the Medicean period was largely if not entirely slavery to demagogism and plutocracy. To the average Florentine of this time the pursuit of happiness consisted in acquiring wealth and gaining opportunity for enjoyment; and in these two matters he was left pretty much to his own devices. But if the pursuit of happiness involved the love of political power, and the individual was not in sympathy with the ruling faction, then the pursuit of happiness was not open to him; but on the contrary, he was but too apt to find his way into prison; or, as an exile, be sent to a foreign country, with the loss of property, dignity, and often of family.

---

[1] Luigi Fumi, *Oriveto, Note storiche e biographiche*, p. 119.

Not every adult male was a citizen, but "in the political language of our statesmen, they understand by citizens those of the dominant faction or party, who alone enjoy the greater honors and favors of the State."[1]

As early as the year 1338 Villani makes an estimate of the population, with the result of attributing to the city proper 90,000, and to the surrounding territory, 400,000 inhabitants. That is according to the calculation of five inhabitants for every man capable of military service, of whom he estimates 80,000. Besides these he estimates that 1500 foreign men, among the non-citizen residents, soldiers, and travellers, were in the city, without counting the members of the various religious organizations, of which there were many.[2] From that period on we read from time to time of the growth of the population, and of the increase of the working classes; and Lorenzo de' Medici applied to the pope for permission to build in the gardens of the monasteries which were within the city walls, on account of the increase of population;[1] yet, when a census is attempted at the end of the fifteenth century, it is found that the population of the city does not exceed 90,000 souls. Accordingly we are constrained to believe that Villani was led into error in his estimate of the population.[2] That the character of the population, however, was changed during that period, is distinctly observable in following the customs from generation to generation. The old aristocracy, with its exclusiveness and simplicity, gives way to the plutocracy, with its love of display combined with good-natured approachableness. The gentleman by blood and breeding makes room for the gentleman of money and fine clothes. The laboring man, each in his little home and comparatively independent, gives place to the factory day-laborer, carousing in public eating-houses, because he has no place to call home. The innocent parsimony of an age of simplicity has turned to the worship of Mammon, in an age of luxury.[3] The Florence just building its third circuit of walls, and contending against the powerful barons in the castles almost under her walls, has become a great city, and extended her domains to include 12,000 parishes, and six other cities,—Pisa, Volterra, Pistoia, Arezzo, Cortona, and San Sepolcro. She sends officials to about 400 walled strongholds, in forty-five of which weekly markets are held. On the day sacred to her patron saint, 100 of these places send as tribute, pieces of palio; while thirty more, in great pomp, offer each a magnificent candle for use in the temple.[1]

---

[1] Guicciardini, *Storia fior.*, 82, n. 1.

[2] VII, 201–202.

---

[1] Roscoe, 235.

[2] It has been contended that Villani was correct, and that the visitations of the plague prevented the population being greater at the end of the fifteenth than at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Add to this, that the great increase of wealth enabled more families to occupy each its own house; and some explanation for the activity in building is offered; but to us it is not sufficient to account for the material growth of the city during a century and a half.

[3] Burckhardt, II, 72, says that during the Renaissance, the differençes of birth between men lost their value,—a result of the Renaissance which "should fill us with everlasting gratitude." We do not find in Florence that birth ever ceased to be an important element in a man's career. Winning distinction in the church, art, or letters, would transfer a man from the lower to a higher class; but the classes existed just as distinctly as they have always done. (See opinions of Florentines quoted in Perrens, II, 121.)

Her citizens are divided into three distinct classes, grandi, popolani, and popolino or popolo minuto; the power, once almost entirely in the hands of the grandi, has been very largely concentrated in the hands of the second class; and members of the other two are practically excluded from the rights and privileges of citizenship. However, the lines between the various classes are not impassable, and many there are who pass over; but the result is not altogether happy. The nature of individuals is not changed by being enrolled under another category; and the history of Florence teaches us most emphatically that it is not possible to absorb an element of any kind of population, without its having a corresponding effect. The absorption of the turbulent nobles was largely, if not wholly, the cause of the struggles between Guelph and Ghibelline, and between Bianchi and Neri. The absorption of a large number of working people from without, who had nothing to lose and everything to gain, helped the Medici to gain their power through the use of money; it contributed to the increase of the intemperate proletariat, and offered food for the spread of the pest. The patronage of the fine arts by the city as a whole, stimulated their growth in the most healthy manner, and they continued to improve in an ever increasing ratio; but the supremacy of the Medici, while apparently fostering them, ended in their degeneracy.[2] Whether in reality one was cause and the other effect, cannot be proved; but that no great public architectural undertaking owes its inception to their influence, remains a fact; painting and sculpture improved immensely during their time, but the new movement was inaugurated and far on its way to greatness before the Medici exercised any controlling influence on public affairs. With their supremacy, the idea of hereditary nobility was revived, and fixed lines of separation of the various classes restored; in the days of Savonarola, there were recognized only two classes, those who paid taxes and those who paid none; but when titles of nobility[1] began to be freely conferred on court favorites, under Cosimo I., and to be considered hereditary, the matter assumed a new aspect; where before there had been constant mobilization, and therefore no place or chance for stagnation, now the conditions of life were changed; and there set in the period of stagnation in reality, under the appearance of order controlled by paternal government. Already at the end of the fifteenth century, Sachetti complains of the title of knight being conferred on even the lowest orders of men, whose conduct is just the opposite of that of the ideal knight; and he affirms that knighthood is indeed dead.[2] At the end of the thirteenth century, we are told that there were practically no taxes; at the middle of the fourteenth, that there were practically no poor, at least none so poor as to be considered paupers.[3] While at the end of the fifteenth century we see 22,000 people accepting alms in the city; and in the following period of Medicean rule, the mendicancy of monks and laity grew to such an extent as to threaten the very existence of the worthy man of independence, who preferred working to begging. From being a government of the people so jealous of their rights and privileges that they would not trust a fellow-citizen with the administration of their highest offices, they went to the opposite extreme of accepting a government of the richest citizen, who treated the public treasury as his own; and though in name a private citizen, dictated the policy of the government in both foreign and domestic matters. This was the natural result of an almost regular gradation, from the rule of the ancient aristocracy to that of the plutocratic bourgeoisie.[1] The individual as such became of less and less importance, while wealth and numbers took the place of genius and worth.

---

[1] Varchi, II, 117.

[2] Taine, *Philosophie de l'art en Italie*, 168–9, has a fine passage on the decline of art, "when painting which was a naïve artisan became a polished cavalier."

---

[1] Burckhardt, II, 108. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Repetti, *Firenze*, 42.

One thing must be constantly borne in mind, when reference is made to Florentine citizens of this period, and that is, the small number of persons who possessed all the rights of citizens. From early times the city was exceedingly free, not only in granting permission to live within its borders, but in doing what was possible and practicable to attract outsiders to become residents. But there was a long distance between the acquisition of residence and the possession of the rights of franchise and holding office. Furthermore, there seems to have been no protest on the part of those who did not possess these rights, at least from the portion who may be supposed to have had a considerable property. Thus there must have been quite a proportion of the business world without these rights, from whom nothing is heard in history. In the enumeration of citizens or rather of population under Savonarola, in 1495, the number of inhabitants amounted to about 90,000, while the number of those possessing all the rights of citizens was only 3,200. If we reckon five individuals to every citizen of full powers, as is customary, we find that these citizens with their families only numbered 16,000 in all; which number, subtracted from the entire population of 90,000, leaves 74,000 of the population, entirely without representation in the government. Again subtracting 20,000, for the proletariat willing to receive alms, under peculiarly favorable circumstances, we still have fifty-four thousand respectable people without representation in the government. Who were these fifty-four thousand? We know that some petty business men, such as bakers, oil dealers, and wine venders enjoyed the rights of citizenship; and it is hardly possible that all these fifty-four thousand unaccounted for belonged to the class of lowest laboring people, too low to be members of even the minor guilds. Accordingly we must conclude that there was a considerable population without the rights of citizens, but not belonging to the lowest classes socially. Whether this part of the population was floating or permanent, we have no means of determining. That the acquisition of Florentine citizenship was looked upon as an especial honor we have already seen in the case of the war captain, Bonifazio Lupi, who gave so much of his wealth for the charities of the city. In the year 1330, Andrea of Pisano received the citizenship of the city in recognition of his merit in having made the bronze doors of the baptistery; those which now face the portico of the Bigallo.[1] By another decree of the government, the celebrated savant Francesco Filelfo was made a citizen of the republic; and the same favor was conferred on the Greek professor, Argyropylus, after his second course of lectures in the city.[2] And Leonardo Bruni, received the rights of citizenship for having written a history of the city.[3] Most of the citizens acquired their rights by heredity; and the age at which they attained the franchise seems to have varied from 24 to 29 years. The latter was the age adopted in the reform of 1494; at which time one must be able to prove that at least his grandfather had exercised the rights of citizenship, and that he himself was a legitimate descendant, before he could have his name written on the list to go into the borsa.[4] In the early days, a letter of Datini declares that he was drawn by force to reside in Florence, made to pay 800 florins, and then rewarded with citizenship;[5] while on the other hand, all who wanted to be recognized as citizens, must have not only other qualifications, but must also possess a house within the city itself.[6] Citizenship, once possessed, could be lost in various ways. Thus, one of the instruments of tyranny was the introduction of certain officials called *Ammoniti*, who were empowered to "warn" any citizen that he was no longer to lay claim to his rights;[1] and this simple process could deprive him of his rights, without appeal. Another law made it tantamount to loss of citizenship to have one's name written in the *Specchio*, for non-payment of taxes; but this evil could be easily remedied by payment. Defeat in political aspirations, in times of excitement, often meant loss of citizenship; for the defeated ones were exiled or even declared rebels, which latter meant not only loss of citizenship but also confiscation of property.[2]

---

[1] G. Thomas, *Revol. Flor.*, 192.

---

[1] Ademollo, II, 720.

[2] Prezziner, I, 92, 131.

[3] *Biografia universale*, Art. Bruni.

[4] Guicciardini, *Reggimento*, 228.

[5] Mazzei, I, 75.

[6] *Ibid.*, I, xci.

Though history never repeats itself precisely, it certainly does seem at times to revolve in circles. Thus in the latter part of the twelfth century we find the head of the Florentine government bearing the title of Duke of Tuscany; he retires, and the republic is established. Not only does the title of duke disappear, but other titles of hereditary nobility are also renounced, in consequence of a law denying the rights of citizenship to those bearing such titles; and all members of the population become practically untitled. True it is, the title of *cavaliere* or knight is retained, but it is not hereditary; and the manner of address to all is simple. Then with the increase of wealth and power the love of this kind of distinction grows, titles are accepted gladly from the potentates of foreign countries, and knighthood is more frequently conferred in the city itself. Finally the Medici occupy the papal throne at Rome and the seat of power at Florence; and again the title of Duke of Tuscany is introduced;—and the liberties of Florence sleep for three centuries.

It required almost a century from the time of the disappearance of the twelfth century duke and dukedom of Tuscany, before the republic was strong enough to demand the renunciation of all titles of nobility, as a condition of the enjoyment of the rights of citizenship. It was in the year 1266 that the first of those old noblemen so far sacrificed their pride as to give up their titles; in time all the others followed their example, or left the country; for there seem to have remained no more, in the later history of the commonwealth. The voluntary degradation went even farther; for at one time, in the latter days of the republic, some of the members of the more influential families were actually having themselves enrolled as members of the minor guilds, in order to be where they might exercise more power. Then at last the tide changes, and the number of those seeking titles increases rapidly. From the first sacrifice of title to the establishment of the Medicean dukedom was almost precisely three centuries; and from that event it was almost exactly another three centuries to the entrance of Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy, when Florence became its free and voluntary capital. What the future will bring, no one can tell; but the tendency seems to be again strongly toward democracy. In all these centuries of war and peace, of wealth and poverty, of pest and healthfulness, one family in Florence has proven of unwavering steadfastness, and seems to be one of the most remarkable examples of the continuation of a private family in history. In the earliest days of the prosperity of the republic, the Peruzzi family was one of the richest and most prominent of all the Florentine families. They were overwhelmed but not destroyed by the bankruptcy of Edward III. King of England. During the Medicean supremacy, they were ever influential, though not among the intimate friends and followers of that régime; and in the days of granting titles of nobility, they refrained from asking or accepting such marks of distinction; while the Strozzi, Corsini, and others gradually rose to the rank of princes. And likewise since the establishment of united Italy, they continue to occupy positions of honor and respect under the central government; but, as I have been told, have ever insisted on the retention of their simple citizenship.

---

[1] Capponi, I, 286.

[2] Two facts make it clear why Florentine citizenship was so highly prized, and explain the reason for the assertion that a citizen of Florence was equal to a nobleman of other Italian cities. These are (1) the small number of those possessing full rights of citizenship, and (2) the difficulty of obtaining those rights by any one who did not inherit them.

The one title which was retained throughout the entire period was that of *cavaliere* or knight. This title might be conferred by the city government,[1] or apparently by men of high standing, who were already of the order. The favorite place for this ceremony was the piazza S. Maria Novella, on which occasions the cloisters of the neighboring monastery of the same name were used as dancing halls and banqueting rooms. In 1369 one of the Rucellai here conferred the title on his two sons, and at the same time celebrated five weddings in his family; the festivities continuing without a moment's cessation for three days and nights.[2] It was also of frequent occurrence that Florentines on a visit or as ambassadors to kings and princes received the title from their hosts; in which case it was looked upon as of especial value. This was the case in Germany, where, to be a knight of the Empire, was of much higher standing than to be knight of a kingdom or petty principality. In the English word knight, we entirely lose the significance of the corresponding word in the Italian, as well as in French and in German; in all of which languages it signifies literally, him who rides a horse. This fact was made especially emphatic to me in the Tuscan mountains, where it was illustrated by actual experience, going about on horseback with men bearing the title, and seeing the respect which seemed to be inspired among the peasantry by the mere sight of men riding. In our country, where the poor man of one day may be the millionaire of the next, no such condition of life is possible; and it is accordingly almost impossible for us to understand the relations of life centuries ago in Italy. But in a country where the peasants are born on the estates of a master, where their ancestors have lived and died for centuries, and where they neither see nor seek a prospect of doing otherwise, the heir of the estates is to them a great man; and, as he generally goes about the country on horseback, his wealth, culture, and social standing are all typified in his riding.

---

[1] This seems to be the natural interpretation of a sentence in Machiavelli's *History of Florence*, L. viii, II, which reads as follows: "Capo di quelli [dei Pazzi] era messer Jacopo, fatto per le sue ricchezze e nobiltà dal popolo cavaliere." See also Roscoe, 115.

[2] Ademollo, II, 718.

During the times of republican simplicity, it was customary for every one to address the other by the simple pronoun of the second person singular, *Tu*. However, there were exceptions in favor of men of special prominence, such as the cavalieri, the doctors of laws, and the canons, who were addressed as Messere; while the practitioners of medicine were addressed as Maestri; and the monks as Padri.[1] If one became really famous, he received the title of *Chiarissimo* (Most illustrious) or of *Magnifico* (Magnificent).[2] It is said that in 1466, the first use was made of the term *Signor* as applied to a single individual, although it had long been in use to designate the priors all together. This is looked upon as the sure sign of one step in the degradation of the public.[3] Not long after, the citizens introduced the title of *Padrone* or Master for Piero de' Medici, which fact illustrates the gradual acceptance of the members of that family as literally the masters of the city.[4] Letters addressed to Lorenzo entitle him *Magnifico et colendissimo Laurentio*, or Magnificent and most illustrious Lorenzo; and also *Magnifice Domine mi*, or My magnificent master. This latter is from the celebrated Poliziano, who at times employed also the familiar *Tu*, notwithstanding this most humble and formal manner of beginning a letter.[5] On the other hand, Lorenzo, speaking to the public, addresses them as *Voi magnifice cittadini*, or You magnificent citizens; a form of address which would probably excite the ridicule of any crowd of American citizens, if any of our politicians should have the bad taste to use it.[6]

If men would only learn thoroughly the lessons taught by history, they would often be saved from the making of great blunders. Thus the Italians of the Renaissance tried innumerable experiments in constitution-making, evidently laboring under the delusion that the form of the constitution could make the government, regardless of the character of the individuals who compose the population of the country. Florence tried one experiment of this kind after another, theorizing on matters of government, without taking into consideration the nature of her citizens; and then wondered why the theory, when put into practice, would not produce better results. Vico, the earliest of political writers with modern ideas, had his work fall to the ground and lie unnoticed, without bearing fruit, simply because his ideas were so far ahead of those known and understood in his day, that people were not ready for them. The same way in France, a century ago, and since. Able writers published theories of government; and the enthusiastic readers and writers thought to put those ideas into practice, perfectly regardless of their inappropriateness to the time and people for whom they were intended. The experiment of our great republic has proven so far successful, largely if not entirely on account of the training in self-control and self-government which the Anglo-Saxon race has had for centuries; but the American nations of Spanish blood, Mexico, Central, and South America, applied similar rules of government to themselves, although they were wanting in the necessary preparation; and the result, if not failure, can certainly not be termed a great success.

---

[1] Varchi, II, 123.

[2] Ademollo, I, 242–243.

[3] Perrens, I, 326.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, 11.

[5] Roscoe, 461, 470.

[6] Machiavelli, *Istorie*, VIII, Chap. X.

The ideas of our century have entirely reversed some of those in vogue and practice, during the palmy days of Florence; for at present one hears constantly of the rights of citizens, and little or nothing of their duties; and all the world is claiming the right to come to these American shores and enjoy the rights and privileges of life here, just as if the prosperity of the country were due to their individual exertions, although up to the period of their arrival, America and freedom are but names to them. Florence taught her own citizens, and certainly foreigners, far differently. The rights were few, and those easily lost. If one inherited citizenship, he had a right at a certain age to have his name placed in the *borsa*, to be drawn by lot for a place in the signoria, or as gonfaloniere di giustizia, or as gonfaloniere of a company. The city recognized its obligation to educate its children, and opened to them, free of cost, primary and higher schools. The government must also have had considerable sense of honor and justice; for not infrequently contracts for public work were made—not that the work should be completed for a fixed price, but that after its completion the price should be settled by a commission; and we do not find that the men who did work under those conditions were called upon to regret their trust in the honor of the city.

The duties of the Florentine citizen were, on the contrary, numerous enough. Not only had he to contribute to the maintenance of his government, but also to the support of the church. In the early times he was subject to military duty; later to exorbitant demands for the maintenance of mercenary troops and the exactions of conquerors and invaders; and in the last days of the republic, when the final struggle for liberty was in progress, he was again made subject to military duty, when a militia was organized according to the suggestions of Machiavelli. When called upon to fill an office of state, whether at home or in one of the possessions of his native city, he was not permitted to refuse; and when absent in response to a call as podestà or other officer in a foreign city, he had to pay a tax to Florence for accepting the honor. If drawn by lot to the signoria, or as gonfaloniere, he might not refuse the charge, even in times of tumult, when such offices were neither pleasing nor desirable. In order to enjoy the privileges of citizenship he must at least be enrolled in some guild, where he had his duties to perform toward the guild; and at one period he was required by law actually to exercise the calling represented by the occupation of the corporation, membership in which he had accepted. He owed allegiance to the government under all circumstances, and might lose the corresponding rights very easily. He could flee from the city if he did not desire to accept the obligations of citizenship; but the goods he could not carry with him were then liable to confiscation. If, having committed an offense against his government, any one fled to a foreign territory, Florence found means of having the offender returned, by inventing treaties of extradition, which are now considered of so much importance in regulating international relations. The first of this nature was a treaty with Venice, of the year 1436, according to which it was agreed by the latter to return to Florence any rebels of the latter who might take refuge in the city of the sea.[1]

The difference between life in Florence during the Renaissance and in America to-day could scarcely be more strikingly illustrated than by an examination of the respective methods of administering justice in both countries. As before remarked, our citizens appear to have all rights and few duties, while in Florence the opposite condition of affairs existed. There were four courts which had the power of punishment in "personalty and realty," as the ancient chronicler words it.[2] These were the podestà, the capitano del popolo, the esecutore degli ordini della giustizia, and the capitano della guardia. All these had also the power to torture. The extent to which torture was used in Florence is enough to horrify us in these days of the sentimental treatment of prisoners. The most common method was by means of the rope, as they called it. Whipping was also used,[3] although mention of it is very rare. Such punishments as cutting off the hands and cutting out the tongue are also mentioned. But on the whole, the Florentines cannot justly be accused of cruelty in comparison with their neighbors.[4]

There seems indeed to have been no standard of the degree of punishment, graded according to the heinousness of the crime. Thus one man was beheaded for crying in times of disaffection "*Vivo il popolo e l'arti.*"[5] Another started a scandal against Gino Capponi, saying he wanted to become gonfaloniere in March and would then overturn the republic. The said maligner was called before the signoria; and being unable to prove his charge, "as a scandalous man, his head was cut off,"—in the closing words of the historian.[6]

On the other hand, the administration of civil causes appears to have been generally of a just nature. Each guild had its own court for disputes arising among its own members; while there was a superior court, composed of five doctors of laws, from other cities, who held office during three years, and before whom were settled suits between Florentines in all parts of the world; also all processes between members of different guilds. From their sentence there was no appeal, although there seems to have been provision to move for a re-hearing by the same court.[1] As we found the business men of Florence possessed of a high degree of business honesty, according to the standard of their times, so it seems also to have been the case in their civil courts. In other words, the prosperity of the city as a business centre was looked upon as of higher value than the life and happiness of individuals. As people defend most heartily that which they prize most highly, the difference between the administration of civil and criminal matters is a good index of the relative value placed by them on life and money; and in the case of Florence, it seems not unjust to say that they prized the latter more.

---

[1] Cavalcanti, I, 628, note 4.

[2] Villani, VII, 205.

[3] Perrens, II, 109.

[4] Prezziner, I, 102–103.

[5] Ammirato, 591.

[6] Cavalcanti, II, 519–520.

Affairs of state are so complicated that it is practically impossible in an intelligent nation to avoid the existence of at least two parties in politics; furthermore such a condition of the public judgment would probably not be politically healthy. The Guelphs finally driving the Ghibellines out of the city of Florence, did not prevent the almost immediate formation of two new parties in the bosom of the old party, which had been united in the desire to conquer a common enemy; but as soon as the common foe was placed hors de combat, it was discovered that the interests of the victors were no longer entirely in common. There were rival families, each wanting the possession of political power, and dissatisfied when the other was in the ascendant. The people as a whole were excitable, and ready for a change at almost any time; the number of leading families was so nearly balanced in power and influence, that exciting a revolution against the established order was a matter of great ease. In fact such a procedure seems to have been looked on almost as a holiday occurrence by the masses, who then had liberty, if only for a short time, to give play to their envy of the more fortunate in life, and give vent to their animal spirits in shouting as loudly as possible, "*Vivo il popolo,*" or "*Palle,*"[1] or some other rallying cry, as the case happened to be. The successful party deprived their defeated rivals of participation in the government, often sent them into exile, and some times confiscated their goods; but sooner or later either the old or new rivals were sure to appear at the front; and the old contest, waged perhaps on somewhat new lines, had to be again met.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, 250. Ademollo, II, 476.

From the final overthrow of the Ghibellines, however, there was one organization which through all vicissitudes, long continued to exercise considerable influence on public affairs of the city, whose existence did not end until after the beginning of the eighteenth century. This was the organization known as the *Parte guelfa.* Under the sanction of the pope and of the emperor, three of the head men of the organization, cavaliers, exercised the chief office, with the title at first of *Consoli de' cavalieri,* which title was later changed to *Capitani di Parte.* Their place of meeting was in the church of Santa Maria sopra Porta, not far from the Ponte Vecchio. They had a secret council of 14 members; and a great council of seventy members, from which the various officials were elected. Three grandi and three popolani were called Priors of the Party, in whose charge was given the money of the party; one of them had the seal of the party, and another was the official accuser of the Ghibellines.[2]

One of our American poets has sung: "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been." And certainly in examining the history of Florence during the Renaissance this thought often recurs to one. Behold a people, gifted almost beyond what the world has ever seen elsewhere, living amidst the most beautiful surroundings, with a healthful climate, and fertile soil. If they had been blessed with peace at home and abroad, the possibilities of their improvement in all that makes life pleasant and valuable might have been unbounded. Plundered by self-seekers, foreign and domestic, entangled in wars from which she had much to lose and often nothing to gain, Florence wasted untold treasures, with which she might have provided the finest education for all her children, gathered priceless libraries, and formed the school of art for all the world. As it was, she accomplished much, yes very much; but one cannot help regretting the deplorable obstacles which hampered her activity. In the early part of the fourteenth century her revenues amounted to more than 300,000 florins, and her necessary outlay was only 46,000, thus leaving a surplus of more than 250,000 florins yearly, which might have been devoted to the elevation of the people and beautifying of the city. But Duke Carl of Calabria cost the city 900,000 florins, and the Duke of Athens plundered it of 400,000 florins; while the wars of a quarter of a century cost them the enormous sum of 11,500,000 florins, the value of a principality at that time.[1] Of course there is the possibility that the existence of so much public prosperity might not have resulted in universal good; just as we have seen nearer home, how the accumulation of enormous wealth may lead to unbounded corruption. The trouble seems to be that human nature is not perfectible, or at least not at a rapid rate; and that it is impossible for the masses to follow for a long period the ideas of a large-minded leader. This was strikingly exemplified in the case of the Emperor Joseph of Austria, who introduced reforms in the last century which are now considered necessary, but which the people were not then prepared to receive; and immediately after his death many of them were set at nought. So it might have been in Florence, if all its wealth and energies had been devoted to the improvement of the city and people; but much more might possibly have been accomplished than was done; and while thankful for what was done, we cannot help regretting that it was not more.

---

[1] Palle signifies balls, the distinctive characteristic of the Medicean coat of arms.

[2] *Giornale Stor. d. Archiv. Toscan.,* II, 289.

---

[1] Reumont, I, 31.

In referring to the weak side of Florentine politics, or the arbitrariness of her tax levies, or the immorality of her citizens, according to the standard of the present, it is not intended thereby to diminish the lustre with which Florence shines in the annals of history. Nor is it meant in the least to detract from the high place which she has heretofore occupied in the affections of historical and art students; but it is in order that we may see her as she was, and thus have a just ground of comparison with our own conditions of life; not that we may love Florence less, or ourselves more, but that we may profit by the lessons to be gathered from her experience. Notwithstanding all her shortcomings, she accomplished wonders, and led the world in a movement toward higher things than had been dreamed of in the age which preceded her supremacy; while with all her genius and talent, she failed to comprehend many of the conditions of a higher life. In spite of great corruption, she furnishes some of the noblest examples in history of self-abnegation; and she offers us pictures of unprecedented generosity, mingled with the most selfish efforts for the attainment of power. Emerging from a period of dense ignorance, she produced some of the most universal minds the world has ever known; and yet, in her university, established a chair of astrology, which is now considered but a relic of barbaric superstition. While far in advance of the rest of Christendom in the condition of her streets, she yet offered abundant food for the pest, a product of non-sanitation. An enthusiastic daughter of the Church, she was nevertheless capable of defying the pope, when feeling that her own rights were invaded; on the other hand, she defended the popes when they were in trouble; and at the same time revived the worship of heathen philosophy, if not of heathen gods. Let us then study her failings, in order to avoid them; let us honor her genius, and try to emulate it; let us pay homage to her virtues, and seek to imitate them; above all, let us take to heart the great lesson afforded by the patriotism of her children, and remember that "they were citizens first, then private individuals; and that they recognized in every glory of their city a family interest."

INDEX.

PAGE.
ACADEMY of fine arts......... 181
Acciajuoli, Donato, public funeral.............................. 59
Aesop.................................. 112
Agent, oath........................... 159
Aggiunti............................ 32 n.
Agriculture........................... 165
Alberti, Leon Battista, on private life......................... 78
Alms-giving........................... 178
America and F. compared...52, 128
America named after a Florentine........................... 13
American and Florentine life compared......................... 72
Ammoniti............................ 35
Anatomy, study of, furthered by government..................... 109
Animal combat........................ 218
Antagonista given each professor................................ 108
Antellesi, coiner of first gold florin............................ 170
Antique, love of the, among scholars......................... 96
Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica first printed at F........ 112
Arbitration........................... 163
Archbishop's position............. 140
Aristides the Orator, first printed at F............................. 112
Aristocracy and plutocracy...... 227
Aristophanes......................... 112
Aristotelianism, revolt against, and the Reformation......... 118
Aristotle.............................. 110
Arnolfo del Cambio, designer of the cathedral.............. 5
Arroti................................ 32 n.
Art and republics.................. 18

PAGE.
Art legacy of F..................... 17
Art, Medicean influence.......... 226
Artefici.............................. 21 n.
Arti (see Guilds)...................
Artichoke introduced............. 165
Assafœtida put in church censer............................ 131
Astrology.......................108, 147
  scientific basis..................... 149
Astronomical inaccuracy......... 122
Athens, art in........................ 18
Athens, Duke of, ruler of F...... 58
Authors, about 2000 at F......... 113
  dramatic............................. 220

BALÌA, defined.................... 41
  delegation of..............42, 54, 60
  history................................ 43
  appendix of most important cases................................ 49
Ball on horseback.................. 214
Ball playing.......................... 201
Balzello............................. 197
Banishment of boys......... 48
Bankrupts incapable of holding office................................ 162
Banks, 80 in F....................... 154
Baptismal names.................... 93
Barberi, Race dei.................. 212
Barons............................ 21
Bassetta............................ 200
Beards first grown at F........... 98
Beheading............................ 48
Bembo, Cardinal, on the "hero Jesus Christ," etc............. 130
Benvenuto Cellini's father....... 126
Biada, judge and six of........... 31
Bigallo company.................... 183
Births, statistics of................ 142
Bishops in conspiracy............. 131

PAGE.
Boccaccio, De genealogia deorum... 112
  Of celebrated women... 84
  Of the fortunes of illustrious men... 84
  Life of Dante... 112
  Theseide... 112
  translates Homer... 109
  view of women... 84
Boethius... 105
Boniface VIII., Pope, jubilee... 19
Book of seven millions... 156
Book-keeping, domestic, first used at F... 90
Borsa...23, 24
Borse tampered with... 54
Braccio... 175
Bracciolini, Poggio, statue... 60
Brunelleschi, designs great cupola... 5
  designs palace for the Medici 65
  story of his crucifix... 75
Buffalmacco and the weaving woman... 76
Buonuomini... 32
Burckhardt on Italian women of the Renaissance... 82
Burning at the stake...48, 132

CALCIO... 201
Callimachus... 112
Camaldulian monks... 116
Canti... 207
Caparra, the famous blacksmith, 58
Capitani della guerra... 40
Capitano del popolo... 28
  della massa de' Guelfi... 29
  di Firenze e Consigliere di pace, 29
Caprus... 103
Car of Death... 207
Card playing... 199
Careggi, villa at...92, 118
Carnival... 205
Carriages, Burckhardt on use of, 98
Catasto... 195
Cathedral... 5
Catholicism, when liberal... 133
  in Europe and America... 129
Cavalcanti on banishing a crazy woman... 85
Charity...64, 179, 190
Charles VIII. of France, reception... 218
Cheese, manufacture... 91

PAGE.
Chess... 202
Chestnuts for food... 165
Church building and civic and personal pride... 137
Church Fathers translated... 111
Church festivals and amusements... 134
Church and politics... 132
  and religion... 178
  and State...39, 131, 138
Churches, number... 6
  use of... 6
  All Saints... 157
  S. Croce... 6
  S. Giovanni... 6
  S. Lorenzo... 6
  S. Maria del Carmine... 189
  S. Maria Novella...6, 76
  S. Pancrazio... 36
  S. Piero Schiereggio... 30
  S. Salvatore... 115
  S. Salvatore del Monte... 189
  S. Spirito...189, 220
Ciompi...34, 37
Citizens, age of full... 229
  number of...42 n. 1, 228
Citizens first, then individuals, 13
Citizenship, never universal in F... 21
  dependent on guild membership... 22
  education for... 73
  loss of... 229
  price of... 229
  rights and duties of... 234
  and clergy... 131
  and party supremacy... 224
Classes... 226
Cleanliness of houses... 89
Clemens of Alexandria... 112
Clergy subject to civil law... 140
Climate... 2
Clock, first in F... 123
Cloth of gold, manufacture... 158
Cloth of honesty... 114
Cogno... 175
Coinage, annual... 154
  receipts from... 194
Colet, John, in F. and England, 20
Columbus receives encouragement from F... 122
Commerce, extent of F... 175
  and situation... 16
  and war... 164

PAGE.
Commerce, international.......... 163
Commercial honor.................. 166
  spirit and Christianity......... 164
  venture of Luca Pitti........... 67
Company *dei Neri*.................. 186
  of the Virgin of the Cross..... 186
Congregazione di S. Martino....... 185
Conservatori delle leggi.............. 35
Consiglio del capitano............... 31
  delle capitudini delle sette maggiori arti........................ 31
  del cento............................. 31
  del comune........................... 31
  di credenza........................... 31
  grande................................ 35
  dei novanta........................... 31
  di ottanta............................ 36
  pubblico.............................. 33
  segreto del popolo.................. 31
  dei trecento.......................... 31
Consoli delle arti..................... 36
Constitution-making................ 233
Consuls in foreign lands........... 38
  maritime........................... 164
Conversation as an art, invented by Italians...................... 99
  not guarded before women.... 82
Corsini family in office............ 53
Country life........................... 90
  of Agnolo Pandolfini............ 92
Country residences................. 90
Court of the bishop of Fiesole... 46
  of the bishop of Florence....... 46
  of Love............................. 203
  of law.............................. 236
  for civil causes.................. 236
Criminals, treatment.............. 186
Criticism of MS. texts............. 104
Culture and crime.................. 126
  and fanaticism................... 177

***Danaro*,** value.................. 170
Dancing of monks.................. 205
Dante's wife after his banishment, 84
  political career.................. 68
Debtors, treatment................. 162
Democracy in Italy................. 161
Demosthenes.......................... 110
Dice-throwing........................ 199
Dictatorship (see Balìa)..........
Dieci di balìa......................... 40
Difensore dell' arti................... 29
Diodorus Siculus.................... 111
Diogenes Laertius.................. 111

PAGE.
Dossal of S. Giovanni............. 188
Dowry of bride...................94, 187
  by means of governmental loans.............................. 156
Dress and "gentlemen,".......... 38
  of men.............................. 38
  of women,.....................80 et seq.
Ducat, value.......................... 169
Duke, title of......................... 230

Ecclesiastics executed.... 140
Education and heredity.......... 222
  higher, outside university..... 116
  in school and by private tutors, compared.................. 105
  Machiavelli on good............ 106
  of citizens......................... 234
Edward III. of England, debts to Florentines................. 154
Eight of the guard.................. 40
Embassy, reception, by signoria, 61
  sent to France.................... 62
Emerson on the "primal antagonism"............................ 15
Engraving invented at F......... 125
Entertainments, extravagance.. 81
Epiphany at F........................ 203
Esecutore degli ordini della giustizia................................ 35
Etiquette............................. 98
  methods of address............. 233
Eugene IV., Pope, dedicates cathedral.......................... 5
  guest of Pandolfini.............. 93
  reception at F.................... 216
Euripides.........................110, 111
Eutichius.............................. 103
Exchange invented at F.......... 154
Execution of criminals, methods of.................................. 48
Extradition, treaties....... 235

Falcons, hunting with........ 92
Fanali on palaces.................... 58
Festival artists....................... 206
Fig introduced 165
Filelfo gathers MSS............... 110
Fireworks............................. 205
Fishing 93
Florence, beauty..................... 2
  becomes independent........... 14
  called modern Athens.......... 110
  compared with Athens and Rome.........................1, 223

PAGE.
Florence, Hallam on constitution ... 49
  history, characterized ... 16
  love of ... 1
  political evolution ... 14
  relations to England ... 19
  relations to France ... 19
  situation and commerce ... 16
  territorial possessions ... 225
  the capital of Italy ... 231
  the instructor of Christendom ... 102
Florentines, an artistic people.. 19
  called the fifth element ... 19
  character ... 10 et seq., 131
  commercial character ... 17
  generally liked notoriety ... 54
  wealth and fame ... 9
Florin, gold, first coined ... 167
  silver ... 167
Flower market ... 161
Foot ball ... 201, 206
Frati de' servi ... 183
Free lodging houses ... 182
Frussi ... 200
Funerals, private ... 95
  public ... 59

GAMBLING, universal at F.... 199
Games and gain for popular influence ... 204
Gardens ... 4
Gate of Justice ... 186
Ghiberti's gates ... 6
Gianfigliazzi honored by city... 59
Giotto's tower ... 2
Gnomon in cathedral ... 122
God's penny ... 191
Gold, depreciation in value ... 171
Gonfaloniere di giustizia ... 26
Good Friday at F ... 136
Government and personal character ... 234
  Medician methods ... 197
  shortcomings ... 58, 223
Grain storage house ... 188
Grandi ... 21
Gratian's Decretal ... 105
Greek capital letters revived at F ... 112
  dictionary, Guarino's ... 114
  teaching of, at F ... 105, 109
  Church sends representatives to F ... 110

PAGE.
Grocyn, William, at F ... 113
Guarino and English university system ... 114
Guelphs and Ghibellines, 415, ... 215, 238
Guelph party ... 38
Guilds, bankers and money changers ... 154
  Calimala ... 153
  called *Arti* at F ... 23
  consuls ... 23
  doctors and druggists ... 157
  furriers ... 159
  government ... 24
  judges and notaries, number of ... 23
  major and minor, number of ... 23
  minor enumerated ... 159
  part of governmental machinery ... 24
  regulated conditions of own membership ... 24
  silk ... 182
  wool, election ... 24
  extent ... 23

HANGING ... 48
Harmony, school ... 126
Herodian ... 111
Herodotus' Life of Homer ... 111
Historical judgment ... 72
Home life, patriarchal ... 77
Homer ... 109, 111
Horseback riding ... 98
Horse racing ... 211
Hospitality ... 97
Hospitals ...
  degli innocenti ... 182
  della scala ... 180
  Orbitello ... 131
  S. Bonifazio ... 183
  S. Gallo ... 183
  S. Giovanni ... 183
  S. Maria Nuova ... 182
  S. Matteo ... 181
  S. Niccolò ... 181
  S. Sebio ... 179
  thirty in F ... 182
Houses, idea of private ... 77
House linen, bride's specialty ... 87
Humble Brothers, leading wool manufacturers ... 157

PAGE.

- **Illegitimate** children, treatment........ 78
- Immigration laws........ 106
- Indulgences, church use........ 149
- Inquisition at F........ 132
- Inquisitor of heretical depravity, 46
- Insane, treatment........ 183
- Intellectuality and nobility...... 102
- Intelligence quickened by social intercourse........ 99
- Interest, various rates........ 156
- Internal feuds........ 70
- Italian character, naïveté........ 79

- **Jesuit** architecture........ 138
- John XXII., Pope, and F. money........ 171
- Jousts........ 214
- Judges of law and appeals........ 45
  - of taxes........ 45
- Judiciary........ 162
  - power, in numerous hands..... 45
  - secret accusations........ 46
- Julius Capitolinus........ 111
- Justice, administration........ 44
  - accuser receives portion of fine imposed........ 47
  - defined........ 44
  - form of accusation........ 44
  - nature of evidence admitted.. 46

- **Knighthood,** conferring, ...213, 231
  - by city........ 59
  - by French king........ 63
  - degeneracy........ 227

- **Labor** day at F........ 160
- Laborers, condition........ 165
- Lampridius........ 111
- Landino receives a villa from the city........ 59
- Latin Church attempts reconciliation with Greek........ 110
- Laws of F. copied by other cities........ 81
  - sumptuary........ 88
- Lazaro da Ticino, doctor to Lorenzo de' Medici........ 123
- Learning an advantage in official life........ 73
- Leo X., Pope, dowry of niece... 94
- Leonzio Pilato, first instructor of Greek at F........ 109

PAGE.

- Lessons of F. history........ 240
- Letter-carrying, cost........ 64
- Levant, trade with........ 164
- Liberty and tyranny........ 15
  - as rallying cry........ 161
- *Libra*........ 174
- Libraries formed........ 103
- Linacre, Thomas, at F........ 113
- *Lira*........ 168
- Loans, forced........ 194
  - to government at fixed interest, first made at F........ 156
- Loggia de' Lanzi........ 8
- Lucian........111, 112
- *Lumiere*........ 58

- **Machiavelli** family in office........ 53
  - The Prince........ 54
- Madonna of Orsanmichele....... 187
- Maecenas and the Medici compared........ 49
- *Maglio*........ 201
- Manilius........ 108
- Manuscripts, first vender........ 103
  - brought to F........ 110
  - collecting........ 103
  - translating........ 110
- Marriage engagements of children........ 94
  - tie, looseness........ 78
- Martin V., Pope, reception...... 216
- Mathematics, first professor...... 109
- May-day at F........ 202
- Mazzei on religious son........ 79
- Mediaeval and modern thought, 100
- Medici, career summarized...... 53
  - influence........ 16
  - not creators of F. greatness... 18
  - palace despoiled........ 66
  - riches........ 166
  - use of public funds........ 155
  - villas........ 91
  - Cosimo, career........ 64
    - death........ 92
  - Giovanni, before the mob..... 66
  - Lorenzo, and Savonarola...... 92
    - and public funds........ 55
    - curator of city's wards....... 59
    - death........ 92
    - education........ 106
    - expenditures for MSS...103 n. 1
    - marriage festivities........ 95
    - on learned woman........ 83

PAGE.
Medici, Lorenzo, political good fortune 66
  writer of hymns and ribald songs 131
Medici, Piero, career 66
  treatment of Luca Pitti 67
Medicine, practice 123
  professors 109
Mercanzia 162
Mercatanti 21 n.
Mercato Nuovo 161
  Vecchio 161
Michael Angelo, at the table of the Medici 75
  city engineer 3
Michelozzi designs palace for Medici (Riccardi) 65
Middle Ages and the Reformation 130
Miglio (Tuscan mile) 175
Military power 42
Miracles 187
Misericordia company 95, 184
Mob action 50, 70, 172
Mohammedans and learning 101
  the educators of western Europe 101
Monasticism 134
Monastic life at F. 142
Money and life, comparative valuation 237
  Florentine 167
  of F. in Tunis 171
  political use 226
Monks in politics 133
Monte 156
  delle doti 94
  political machine 93
Moving-day at F. 78
Mulberry trees, cultivation 158
Musaeus 112
Music at F. 125
Musical instruments 64, 125

NAIBI 199
National Museum 8
Nobili, last gonfaloniere 27
Nobility, hereditary 227
  phases of history 230
Nobles and merchants 39
Non-citizens, number 228
Notarial law invented at F. 153
Notary of reforms 33
Novina 194

PAGE.
OBLATE (serving nuns) 180
Office holding and back taxes 195
  malfeasance in 55
Officer of the clergy 46
  of the ornaments of the women 46
  of the piazza and provisions 45
  of the wool guild 46
Official life, vicissitudes 57
  a model 56
Officials, basis of judging 54
  characterized 6, 54
  conduct of new 57
  corruption 55
  excuse for corruption 56
  Florentines demand pomp from 60
Olive oil for domestic use 88
Oltrarno. 3
Opera invented at F. 126, 221
Opera delle mura 183
Oppianus 112
Orators and oratory 61
Ordinamenti della giustizia 34
Otto della guardia 40, 64

PALAZZO, Pitti 9, 66
  Podestà 8
  Riccardi 9, 65
  Strozzi 9
  Vecchio 8
    bells of 7
Palio 212
Palle 238
Pallone 201
Parlamento generale 33
Parliamentary procedure 33
Parte guelfa 238
Parties, political 237
Pazzi, Jacopo, body maltreated 147
Peruzzi family 53, 231
Pest in 1348 184
Philistinism at F. 123
Physical exercise, a part of education 120
Piazzale Michelangelo 189
Picconieri 26
Pico della Mirandola and Poliziano in the country 91
  opposes astrology 109
Pitti, Luca, career 67
Planets affect tides 149
Plato and Christ 131
Platonic Academy 92, 117, 118

H
31
.J661
v.14

PAGE.
Plautus 103
Pliny 111
Plutarch 111
Podestà 8, 14, 27, 28
Poetic contest 119
Poggio a Cajano, villa 47, 91
Politics and superstition 146
Poliziano on use of Greek at F. 110
  quarrel with Lorenzo's wife 83
Pome 202
Pomponius Mela 112
Ponte Vecchio 8
Pope as temporal prince 129
Popolani 21, 22
  grassi 22
Popolino 21, 22
Population 16, 224, 226
Pound weight 174
Poveri vergognosi 178
Prices and trusts 174
Primiera 200
Priori delle arti 37
  di libertà 24
Priors 24
Prisons, governmental receipts 193
  life in 48
Probus 103
Procession, carnival 207
  "Golden Age," 209
  Palm Sunday 204
Procopius 111
Proverb on industry and intellect 152
  on public service 57
Public life defined 69
Public meetings 42, 69
Public spirit at F 177
Punishments, legal 45, 55, 236

QUACK, tragic death 96
Quintilian 103

RAPHAEL, Madonna della sedia 66
Reform and reaction 239
Register of unpaid taxes 35
Religion, form and spirit 7
  horoscope 146
Rettori 30
Revenue, city 196
Rich and poor brought together in office 60
Riches and corruption 166
Richiesti 32

PAGE.
Ringhiera 7
Robert of Naples rules F 29
"Rope," an instrument of torture 47
Rucellai, five weddings 231
  gardens 118
  origin of name 157

SACCHETTI on F. justice 44
  on old knight 215
Saint Anna, feast 213
  Barnabas, feast 213
  Bernardo, writings 105
  Giovanni, feast 203, 205, 213
  Peter, feast 213
  Reparata, feast 211
  Victor, feast 213
Salt, governmental monopoly 156
Salutato, Coluccio, public funeral, 59
Savonarola, career 68
Scala, tax 196
School of harmony 126
  of mosaic 138
Schools 104
Science and superstition 145
Scioperato 37
Scudo 169
Self-government at F 160
Servants, treatment 87
Sesti 24
Settina 194
Sheep, one million in Tuscany 157
Shrines on houses 137
Signoria, cost of maintenance 25
  institution of new 69
  members appear in arms 24
  powers 25
Silk, cultivation 92
  export forbidden 159
  manufacture 17, 157
Simplicity of F. life 75, 96
Slave set free 87
Society, changes 225
Soderini, family in office 53
  Piero, gonfaloniere for life, 26, 28
  receives letter on voyage of Amerigo Vespucci 58
Soldi 168
Somma 174
Songs of carnival 207
Soup, early form 89
  "English" 89
Spartianus 111
Specchio 35

PAGE.
Statuti 83
Stinche, debtor prison 55
Stones, usual F. weapon 70
Story, W. W., on dirt 89
Street fights 71
  Oriuolo 123
  Scala 180
  shows 218
Streets lighted at night 5
  paved and drained 4
Strozzi, Louisa, quarrel about... 98
    Maddalena, marriage festivities 84
Students' dress 114
Studies 90
Sumptuary laws 80, 97, 214
Sunday in Europe 129
Surgery, professors 109

Taine on Benvenuto Cellini.. 120
  on Italy in XV. century 101
Taxes and poverty 227
  and revenue 239
  and taxation ....192 et seq.
  arbitrary 52
  new, invented by Luca Pitti, 67
  on church property 139
  on holding foreign office 235
Ten of full power 40
Terence 112
Theatricals 219
Thompson, Sir William, theory of origin of matter 148
Torture, judicial 45, 47, 236
Toscanelli, astrologer 148
  constructs great gnomon 122
Travelling and breadth of character 122
Tyranny and anarchy compared by Guicciardini 49

University, absolutely free, 114
  degrees 115

PAGE.
University, founded 106
  salaries 115
  students, number 114
  studies 107
Usury and the Church 155
  laws unavailing 155

Valori on treatment of women 86
Varchi on private houses 77
Vatican doors, sculpture 130
Vergil, superstitious use 145
Ventina 194
Vico, political writings 234
Villani, on F. justice 24
Virgin, sacred images 139
Vittorino, and English university system 114

Wages of cook 87
Walls of city 3
War with Lucca and Milan 49
  and superstition 146
  cost 239
"Warned" 35
Wealth and luxury increase together 96
Wheat, prices ....172 et seq.
Wine, cheapness 89
  measure 174
  tax 193
Woman tortured 85
Women, dress 80
  in the Platonic Academy 117
  legal standing 84
  politically 21
  portraits of XV. century 81
Wool, manufactures 17
  sources of supply 157
Writing taught in fifteen days... 105

Xenophon 111

Zecchino 169

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
STUDIES
IN
Historical and Political Science.

HERBERT B. ADAMS, Editor.

These Studies were begun in 1882. Ten series have been completed, and thirteen extra volumes issued.

The set of ten series is now offered in a handsome library edition for $30.00, and including subscription to the current (eleventh) series $33.00. The ten series with the thirteen extra volumes, altogether twenty-three volumes, for $50.00.

ANNUAL SERIES, 1883-1892.

SERIES I.—Local Institutions. 479 pp. $4.00.

SERIES II.—Institutions and Economics. 629 pp. $4.00.

SERIES III.—Maryland, Virginia, and Washington. 595 pp. $4.00.

SERIES IV.—Municipal Government and Land Tenure. 600 pp. $3.50.

SERIES V.—Municipal Government, History and Politics. 559 pp. $3.50.

SERIES VI.—History of Coöperation in the United States. 540 pp. $3.50.

SERIES VII.—Social Science, Municipal and Federal Government. 628 pp. $3.50.

SERIES VIII.—History, Politics, and Education. 625 pp. $3.50.

SERIES IX.—Education, History, and Social Science. 640 pp. $3.50.

SERIES X.—Church and State, Columbus and America. 630 pp. $3.50.

EXTRA VOLUMES.

I.—The Republic of New Haven. By CHARLES H. LEVERMORE. 342 pp. $2.00.

II.—Philadelphia, 1681–1887: A History of Municipal Development. By E. P. ALLINSON and BOIES PENROSE. 444 pp. $3.00.

III.—Baltimore and the 19th of April, 1861. By GEORGE WILLIAM BROWN. 176 pp. $1.00.

IV-V.—Local Constitutional History of the United States. By GEORGE E. HOWARD. Vol. I, 542 pp. $3.00. Vol. II in preparation.

VI.—The Negro in Maryland. By JEFFREY R. BRACKETT. 270 pp. $2.00.

VII.—The Supreme Court of the United States. By W. W. WILLOUGHBY. 124 pp. $1.25.

VIII.—The Intercourse between the United States and Japan. By INAZO (OTA) NITOBE. 198 pp. $1.25.

IX.—State and Federal Government in Switzerland. By J. M. VINCENT. 225 pp. $1.50.

X.—Spanish Institutions in the Southwest. By F. W. BLACKMAR. 380 pp. $2.00.

XI.—An Introduction to the Study of the Constitution. By M. M. COHN. 251 pp. $1.50.

XII.—The Old English Manor. By C. M. ANDREWS. 280 pp. $1.50.

XIII.—America: Its Geographical History from 1492 to the present Time. By W. B. SCAIFE. 188 pp. $1.50.

XIV.—Florentine Life during the Renaissance. By W. B. SCAIFE. 256 pp. $1.50.

FIRST SERIES.—Local Institutions.—1883.—$4.00.

- **I. An Introduction to American Institutional History.** By Edward A. Freeman. 25 *cents.*
- **II. The Germanic Origin of New England Towns.** By H. B. Adams. 50 *cts.*
- **III. Local Government in Illinois.** By Albert Shaw.—**Local Government in Pennsylvania.** By E. R. L. Gould. 30 *cents.*
- **IV. Saxon Tithingmen in America.** By H. B. Adams. 50 *cents.*
- **V. Local Government in Michigan, and the Northwest.** By E. W. Bemis. 25 *cents.*
- **VI. Parish Institutions of Maryland.** By Edward Ingle. 40 *cents.*
- **VII. Old Maryland Manors.** By John Hemsley Johnson. 30 *cents.*
- **VIII. Norman Constables in America.** By H. B. Adams. 50 *cents.*
- **IX-X. Village Communities of Cape Ann and Salem.** By H. B. Adams. 50 *cts.*
- **XI. The Genesis of a New England State (Connecticut).** By Alexander Johnston. 30 *cents.*
- **XII. Local Government and Free Schools in South Carolina.** By B. J. Ramage. 40 *cents.*

SECOND SERIES.—Institutions and Economics.—1884. —$4.00.

- **I-II. Methods of Historical Study.** By H. B. Adams. 50 *cents.*
- **III. The Past and the Present of Political Economy.** By R. T. Ely. 35 *cts.*
- **IV. Samuel Adams, The Man of the Town Meeting.** By James K. Hosmer. 35 *cents.*
- **V-VI. Taxation in the United States.** By Henry Carter Adams. 50 *cts.*
- **VII. Institutional Beginnings in a Western State.** By Jesse Macy. 25 *cts.*
- **VIII-IX. Indian Money as a Factor in New England Civilization.** By William B. Weeden. 50 *cents.*
- **X. Town and County Government in the English Colonies of North America.** By Edward Channing. 50 *cents.*
- **XI. Rudimentary Society among Boys.** By J. Hemsley Johnson. 50 *cts.*
- **XII. Land Laws of Mining Districts.** By C. H. Shinn. 50 *cents.*

THIRD SERIES.—Maryland, Virginia and Washington.—1885.—$4.00.

- **I. Maryland's Influence upon Land Cessions to the United States.** George Washington's Interest in Western Lands, the Potomac Company, and a National University. By H. B. Adams. 75 *cents.*
- **II-III. Virginia Local Institutions:—The Land System; Hundred; Parish; County; Town.** By E. Ingle. 75 *cents.*
- **IV. Recent American Socialism.** By Richard T. Ely. 50 *cents.*
- **V-VI-VII. Maryland Local Institutions:—The Land System; Hundred; County; Town.** By Lewis W. Wilhelm. $1.00.
- **VIII. The Influence of the Proprietors in Founding the State of New Jersey.** By Austin Scott. 25 *cents.*
- **IX-X. American Constitutions; The Relations of the Three Departments as Adjusted by a Century.** By Horace Davis. 50 *cents.*
- **XI-XII. The City of Washington.** By J. A. Porter. 50 *cents.*